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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

July—1939	...	...	1
August—1939	...	...	12
September—1939	...	...	20
October—1939	...	...	29
November—1939	...	...	37
December—1939	...	...	45

### INDIA IN HOME POLITY

INTRODUCTION	...	...	54
India's attitude to the European War	...	...	54
Her instinctive sympathy with Poland	...	...	54
Bitter Relation between Poland & Germany	...	...	55
Nazism—its disrespect to human personality	...	...	56
Is the breeding ground of Totalitarianism	...	...	57
Special Characteristics of Nazism	...	...	58
World revulsion against it	...	...	58
The Shock of Russo-German Pact	...	...	59
Fruitless attempt to organise alliance against Germany	...	...	59
Reasons for this failure yet unpublished	...	...	60
A curious ignorance shown by Britain & France	...	...	61
Diplomacy of Soviet Russia	...	...	61
To weaken Capitalist States	...	...	62
Japan's Civilising mission in China	...	...	62
War & conquest—"moral forces of history"	...	...	63
British helplessness in face of Japan	...	...	63
Danger to British possessions	...	...	64
Scheme of Singapore Base	...	...	64
India's place in Imperial defense	...	...	64
Chatfield Committee's Report emphasises it	...	...	65
Financial "gift" to India made by Britain	...	...	66
Indian Army an Imperial Force	...	...	66
Britain's "gift"—a deferred payment of debt	...	...	67
Principles for which the Allies have been fighting	...	...	67
Gandhiji's response to Viceroy's appeal	...	...	68
Congress Attitude	...	...	68
The All-India Muslim League & the War	...	...	69
Its conditions of co-operation	...	...	69
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind's attitude	...	...	70
All-India Hindu Mahasabha & War	...	...	70

National Liberal Federation and All-India Christian Conference's support	...	71
British failure to organise Indian defence	...	71
India's fear for her unity and integrity	...	72
Indian demands unfortunately "ill-timed"	...	72
British response to demand for clarification of war-aims	...	72
India & Dominion Status	...	73
Responsibility for India cannot be shared by Britain even with India	...	74
Declaration of peace or war—a right of the Dominions	...	75
Lack of imagination in British Government	...	75
Communal differences crop up	...	76
A catalogue of minorities—their jumble	...	77
Communal differences—raised by seekers after political power	...	77
Muslim separatism unsupported by history	...	77
Modern Hindu & Muslim culture—a common heritage	...	78
Ignorance of this is the root of the evil	...	78
"Political Power"—the object of competition	...	79
"Communal Award" is no safety to minorities	...	80
Rise of Hindu Communalism	...	80
Founder of Khaksar organisation	...	80(a)
14 Points of the Khaksar creed	...	80(a)
An instrument of communal ambition	...	80(b)
Differences among Congressmen	...	80(c)
Ban put on Sri Subhas Chandra Basu	...	80(c)
The causes of this controversy	...	80(d)
Labour & Capital disagree	...	80(e)
Rise of Totalitarianism	...	80(f)
Sacrifice of the Individual	...	80(f)
<b>THE COUNCIL OF STATE</b>		<b>81</b>
<b>AUTUMN SESSION—SIMLA—12TH. SEPT. TO 27TH. SEPT. 1939</b>		<b>81</b>
Sympathy to Poland	...	82, 84
Official Bills passed	...	82
Pacific Locomotive Comm. Report	...	82
Debate on the Chatfield Report	...	83
Manufacture of Locomotives in India	...	84
Indianisation of I. M. S.	...	84
Discrimination in Military Hospitals	...	85
Defence of India Bill	...	85
<b>THE INDIAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>		
<b>AUTUMN SESSION—SIMLA—30TH. AUGUST TO 22ND. SEPT. '39</b>		<b>88</b>
Pacific Locomotive Committee Report	...	88
Adjournment of Debate	...	88
Hindu Women's Divorce Bill	...	89, 102
Advantage of Protective Tariffs	...	90
Relief in Income-Tax	...	91
Bandra Boat Disaster	...	91
Moratorium in Railways	...	91
Census Bill	400	92

Defence of India Bill	...	98, 99, 101, 104
Indian Tariff Act Amendment Bill	...	98
Arbitration Bill	...	98
Adjournment Motion—The Chatfield Report	...	98
Recommendations of the Chatfield Committee	...	94
Distribution of Army in India	...	95
Modernized Units	...	95
Air Forces	...	95
Royal Indian Navy	...	95
Ordinance Factories	...	95
Official Bills Passed	...	97
H. E. the Viceroy's Address	...	97
Ruthless German Attack	...	98
Broken Pledges	...	98
Appeal for Unity	...	98
Principles at Stake	...	98
Federation Postponed	...	99
Pacific Locomotive Committee Report	...	100
New Bills Introduced	...	103
Autonomy for Baluchistan	...	104
Indian Air Forces Reserve	...	107
Other Bills Passed	...	107
Workmen's Compensation Amendment Bill	...	107

#### THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

BUDGET SESSION—CALCUTTA—6TH. JULY to 13TH. JULY '39	109
Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill	109
Hunger Strike of Political Prisoners	109
Congress Party and the Advisory Committee	111
Sir Nazimuddin's Statement	111
Rules for Conduct of Business	113
WINTER SESSION—CALCUTTA—27TH. NOV. TO 20TH. DEC. '39	113
Agricultural Debtors Amendment Bill	113, 115
Adjournment Motion—Ban on Meetings	113
Control of Jute Production	115
Adi-Ganga Improvement Bill	115
Political Prisoners' Classification Bill	115
Anti-Thumb Impression Bill	115
Public Misdemeanour Bill	115
Court of Wards Amendment Bill	115
Other Bills	115
Official Bills Introduced	115
Supplementary Budget Estimates	115
The Bengal Fisheries Bill	115
Transfer of Property Amendment Bill	117
Jute Futures Ordinance	117
Alleged Assault on Under-Trial	117
Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill	118
The War Repatriation	118
Education in Bengal	123

Jute Regulation Bill Postponed	...	...	123
Mr. Sarkar's Resignation	...	...	123
<b>THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL</b>			
JULY SESSION—CALCUTTA—7TH. TO 14TH. JULY '39			124
Adjournment Motions	...	...	124
Draft Rules of Procedure	...	...	125, 126
Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill	...	...	125
WINTER SESSION—CALCUTTA—23RD. NOV TO 20TH. DEC. '39			126
Adjournment Motions	...	...	126
Military Training in Schools	...	...	126
Control of Films	...	...	127
Japan's Paddy Cultivation	...	...	127
The Money Lenders' Bill	...	127, 129,	130
The Prohibition Bill	...	...	127
Abolition of Dowry Bill	...	...	127
Shop Assistants Bill	...	...	127
Shops and Establishments Bill	...	...	128, 129
Workmen's Protection Bill	...	128, 129	
Inland Steam Vessels Amendment Bill	...	...	128
Training in Aviation	...	...	128
Resolution on War	...	...	129
Mr. Sarkar's Resignation	...	...	130
Privilege Motion	...	...	130
<b>THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>			
POONA SESSION—POONA—14TH. TO 31ST. AUGUST '39			131
Bombay Municipal Amendment Bill	...	...	131
Demand of Press Security	...	...	131
The Money-Lenders' Bill	...	...	131
Land Revenue Amendment Bill	...	...	131
The Bombay Tenancy Bill	...	...	133
The Finance Act Amendment Bill	...	...	133
BOMBAY SESSION—BOMBAY—25TH. SEPT. TO 31ST. OCT. '39			134
The Bombay Tenancy Bill	...	...	134
Fodder and Grain Control Bill	...	...	135
Agricultural Debtors' Relief Bill	...	...	135, 136
Reduction of Marriage Expenses	...	...	135
Minorities and the Services	...	...	136
Resolution on War	...	...	137
Agricultural Produce Marketing Bill	...	...	142
Shop Assistants Bill	...	...	143
Resignation of the Ministry	...	...	143
<b>THE BOMBAY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL</b>			
BOMBAY SESSION—BOMBAY—27TH. SEPT. TO 31ST. OCT. '39			143
Agricultural Produce Markets Bill	...	...	143
<b>THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>			
AUGUST SESSION—MADRAS—1TH. TO 8TH. AUGUST 1939.			144

## ( ix )

The Temple-Entry Indemnity Bill	...	...	144
Abolition of Devadasi System	...	...	145
Race News Prohibition Bill	...	...	145
I. M. S. Officers' Posts	...	...	145
SPECIAL SESSION—MADRAS—26TH OCTOBER 1939	...	...	145
Resolution on War	...	...	145
Muslim Leaguers' Walk out	...	...	146
THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL			
AUGUST SESSION—MADRAS—7TH. TO 9TH. AUGUST 1939	...	...	146
The Temple-Entry Indemnity Bill	...	...	146
Rice Imports from Burma	...	...	149
THE U. P. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY			
MONSOON SESSION—LUCKNOW—12TH. TO 22ND JULY 1939	...	...	151
Shia-Sunni Tangle	...	...	151
Cawnpur Police Firing	...	...	151
Agriculturists Debt Redemption Bill	...	...	151
Arrears of Rent Remission Bill	...	...	152
Encumbered Estates Amendment Bill	...	...	152
New Road Programme	...	...	152
Money-lenders' Bill	...	...	152
Road Development Programme	...	...	152
OCTOBER SESSION—LUCKNOW—3RD. TO 30TH. OCTOBER '39	...	...	153
Financial Position of the Province	...	...	153
The Tenancy Bill	...	...	153
Power Alcohol Bill	...	...	154
Resolution on War	...	...	154
THE U. P. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL			
MONSOON SESSION—LUCKNOW—3RD. TO 8TH. JULY 1939	...	...	160
The Indian Medicine Bill	...	...	160
Madhe-Sahaba Tabarra Controversy	...	...	160
Police Firing on Shias	...	...	160
The Tenancy Bill	...	...	161
AUTUMN SESSION—LUCKNOW—10TH. AUGUST TO 13TH. OCT. '39	...	...	161
Members not to be Hony. Magistrates	...	...	161
The Tenancy Act Amendment Bill	...	...	161
Maternity Benefits Bill	...	...	162
Oudh Laws Amendment Bill	...	...	162
Tenancy Laws Amendment Bill	...	...	162
Power Alcohol Bill	...	...	163
The Debt Redemption Bill	...	...	164
THE BEHAR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY			
AUTUMN SESSION—PATNA—16TH. SEPT. TO 18TH OCT. '39	...	...	164
Adjournment Motions	...	...	164, 165, 167
Famine Relief Fund Amend Bill	...	...	164

Primary Education Amendment Bill	...	...	164
Court of Wards Amendment Bill	...	...	164
Kosi Diara Rent Reduction Bill	...	...	165
Tenure Holders' Relief Bill	...	...	165
Replacement of Aloe Plantations	...	...	165
Transference of Land to Christians	...	...	165
Muslim Wakfs Bill	...	...	165
Supplementary Demands	...	...	166
Rules of the Assembly	...	...	166
The Dowry Restraint Bill	...	...	167
Official Bills	...	...	167
Resolution on War	...	...	167
<b>THE BEHAR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL</b>			
AUTUMN SESSION—PATNA—25TH. SEPT. TO 14TH OCTOBER '39			169
<b>THE ASSAM LEGISLATURE</b>			
JOINT SESSION—SHILLONG—4TH. AUGUST 1939			
Agricultural Income-Tax Bill	...	...	169
COUNCIL SESSION—10TH. AUGUST 1939		...	169
The Finance Bill	...	...	169
<b>THE C. P. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>			
AUTUMN SESSION—NAGPUR—2ND TO 18TH AUGUST '39			170
Land Revenue Amendment Bill	...	...	170
Primary Education Amendment Bill	...	...	171
Other Official Bills	...	...	171
Tenancy Amendment Bill	...	...	171, 172
Money-lenders' Amendment Bill	...	...	171
Minimum Wages Bill	...	...	171
Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery Bill	...	...	171
Municipal Roads—Adjournment Motion	...	...	171
Agrarian Distress	...	...	172
Harijan Temple Worship Bill	...	...	172
The Vidyamandir Bill	...	...	172
Collection of Statistics Bill	...	...	173
WINTER SESSION—NAGPUR—1ST. TO 8TH. NOVEMBER '39			173
The Vidyamandir Bill	...	...	173
The Tenancy Bill	...	...	173
Resolution on War	...	...	174
<b>THE ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>			
MONSOON SESSION—CUTTACK—4TH. TO 15TH. SEPTEMBER '39			177
Sambalpur Local Self-Government Bill	...	...	177, 178
Orissa Development Schemes	...	...	178
Prohibition Bill	...	...	178, 180
Supplementary Demands	...	...	179
Court Fees Amendment Bill	...	...	180



<b>SPECIAL SESSION—NAGPUR—3RD. NOVEMBER '39 .</b>	<b>181</b>
The Tenancy Bill	181
Resolution on War	180
<b>THE PUNJAB LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>	
<b>WINTER SESSION—LAHORE—24TH. OCT. TO 12TH. DEC. '39</b>	<b>183</b>
The Trade Employees Bill	183
Debtors Protection Amendment Bill	184
Ban on Congress Leader	184
Factories Amendment Bill	184
State aid to Industries Amendment Bill	184
Arrests under Defence Act	184
Adjournment Motions Rejected	185
Fresh Avenues for Taxation	185
Non-agricultural Debtors	186
Resolution on War	186
Entertainment Tax	187
Adjournment Motions	187
Demand for Press Securities	188
Hand-cuffing of Assembly Member	188
Supplementary Demands	189
City of Lahore Corporation Bill	189
Allowance to Ministry	190
Lahore Compensation Bill	190
Rising Prices in Punjab	191
Debt Redemption Bill	191
Village Panchayats Bill	192
<b>THE N. W. FRONTIER LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY</b>	
<b>AUTUMN SESSION—PESHAWAR—14TH. TO 28TH. SEPT. '39</b>	<b>192</b>
Official Bills Passed	192
Table Waters Bill	193
Control of Prices	193
Tribal Outrages	193
Non-official Bills	193
Adjournment Motion	193
Official Bills	195
The Goondas Bill	194
Hindus & Sikhs in Constabulary	194
<b>SERIAL SESSION—PESHAWAR—6TH. &amp; 7TH. NOV. '39</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>RESOLUTION ON WAR</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Conference of the Secretaries—Bombay—27th. June '39</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Circulars to the Provincial Congress Committees</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>NOTES</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>General</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Control of Accounts</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Books and Registers</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Shri Vallabhbhai Patel's ruling</b>	<b>203</b>

Working Committee rule of 1935 (Jubbulpore Resolution)	203
NOTES :—	
On Rajkot	204
On Digboi Strike	205
On the Political Prisoners' Day	209
On National Planning Committee	209
Shri Kumarappa's Communications	211
Shri Rajendra Prasad's Reply	211
PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE	211
WARDHA—9TH. TO 12TH AUGUST '39	211
Congress Exhibitions	212
Disciplinary Action	212
Demonstration of July 9 and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose	212
Ceylon	213
Condolence	214
War Preparation	214
Bengal Political Prisoners	215
South Africa	215
Prohibition in Bombay	215
Harijan Temple Entry, Madras	215
Charges against Shri D. P. Misra (C. P.)	215
Bengal Dispute—Change of the Executive	216
President's Judgment	216
Demonstrations of July 9 (Correspondence)	218
NOTES :—	
The Hunger-strike of Political Prisoners in Bengal	220
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Ceylon	221
Prohibition on August 1	223
PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE	223
WARDHA—8TH. TO 15TH. SEPT. '39	223
Delhi P. C. C.	223
A. I. C. C. Fund	224
Bengal P. C. C.	224
Bengal Election Tribunal	225
Utkal Election Tribunal	225
Obituary—Rev. U. Ottama	225
Sri Chintamani Misra (Utkal)	225
Ajmere P. C. C.	226
War Crisis and India	226
A. I. C. C. Meeting	229
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru	229
War Committee	229
NOTES	229
Pandit Jawaharlal's Visit to China	229
Settlement in Jaipur	229
Premiers' Conference—August 28 to 30, 1939	230
PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE	230
WARDHA—9TH. AND 10TH. OCTOBER '39	230

Resolution—War Crisis	...	...	281
The Next Congress and Elections	...	...	282
Non-official Resolutions	...	...	282
<b>PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE</b>			
WARDHA—7TH. TO 11TH. OCT. '39	...	...	282
Accounts	...	...	282
War Situation	...	...	282
Provincial Constitution	...	...	282
Provincial Constitution	...	...	282
N. W. F. Province	...	...	282
Rajendra Prasad-Jinnah Correspondence	...	...	283
<b>NOTES—GANDHI JAYANTI</b>			
All India States' Peoples' Conference	...	...	284
War and Indian States	...	...	284
Indian States and the Working Committee	...	...	285
<b>PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE</b>			
WARDHA—22ND. & 23RD. OCTOBER '39	...	...	286
Negotiations with the British Government	...	...	286
Instructions to Ministries and Legislative Parties	...	...	287
Charges against Shri D. P. Misra	...	...	287
The Constitution of the Bombay P. C. C.	...	...	287
<b>PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE</b>			
ALLAHABAD—19TH. TO 23RD. NOVEMBER '39	...	...	287
Political Situation created by War	...	...	287
Congressmen on Govt. Committees and Department in Congress Provinces	...	...	289
Bengal Dispute	...	...	289
Disciplinary Action—Shris Kedar, Jakatdar and Subedar (C. P. Assembly)	...	...	241
Office-Bearers, Delhi P. C. C.	...	...	241
Utkal P. C. C.	...	...	241
Annual Session Election Time Table	...	...	241
A. I. C. C. Circulars, Allahabad	...	...	241
Viceroy's letter to President & Gandhi	...	...	242
President's Reply to Viceroy—3rd. Nov. 1939	...	...	242
Mr. Jinnah's letter to Viceroy—11th Nov. 1939	...	...	244
Viceroy's Broadcast Declaration	...	...	245
<b>NOTES</b>			
The resolutions on War-Crisis in Provincial Assemblies	...	...	246
Gandhi's Article—the Next Step	...	...	246
The Only Way	...	...	247
<b>PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE</b>			
WARDHA—18TH. TO 22ND. DEC. 1939	...	...	249
Political Situation	...	...	249
Independence Day	...	...	249
Pledge	...	...	250

Bengal P. C. C. affairs	...	...	250
Members of the Ad Hoc Committee	...	...	251
A. I. C. C. Fund in Bengal	...	...	251
Adult Report of Bengal Prov. Congress Committee Accounts	...	...	252
The A. I. C. C. Circulars	...	...	253
Publicity Department	...	...	254
Minority Department	...	...	255
Harijan Department	...	...	255
Charkha Department	...	...	255
What it Means	...	...	256

### THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

FROM MARCH '39 TO FEBRUARY 1940	...	...	257
National Demand	...	...	257
Congress Machinery	...	...	258
Foreign Policy	...	...	258
Stalemate in the Congress	...	...	258
Reform in the Congress Machinery	...	...	259
Indians in Ceylon	...	...	260
Indians in South Africa	...	...	261
Political Prisoners	...	...	262
Demonstrations on July 9 and Disciplinary Action Against Shri Subhas Chandra Bose	...	...	262
National Planning Committee	...	...	263
War Crisis	...	...	264
Communal Problem	...	...	268
Bengal Dispute	...	...	271
Indian States	...	...	275
Travancore	...	...	276
Mysore	...	...	277
Jaipur	...	...	277
Hyderabad	...	...	278
Orissa	...	...	278
Limbdi	...	...	279
Benefits of Congress Governments	...	...	279
Madras	...	...	280
Bombay	...	...	280
United Provinces	...	...	280
Orissa	...	...	280
Assam	...	...	280
Bihar	...	...	281
Central Provinces	...	...	281
Observance of Days	...	...	281

### THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION

21ST. SESSION—ALLAHABAD—27TH. TO 29TH DECEMBER 1939	...	...	282
The Welcome Address	...	...	282
The Presidential Address	..	...	283
The International Situation	...	...	284
Lessons for India	...	...	285
Congress Demand for a Declaration	...	...	286

Viceroy's offer of change at the centre	...	...	287
A Constituent Assembly	...	...	287
Working of Provincial Democracy	...	...	289
Totalitarian Tendencies	...	...	289
Hindu-Muslim Tension	...	...	290
The Muslim League	...	...	291
Broadening Congress Cabinets	...	...	291
The Defence Problem	...	...	293
Industrial Planning	...	...	293
Federation	...	...	294
Need of All-parties Conference	...	...	294
<b>PROCEEDINGS &amp; RESOLUTION—28TH. &amp; 29TH. DECEMBER 1939</b>			<b>295</b>
The Liberal Party's Losses	...	...	295
International War	...	...	296
Viceroy's Statement	...	...	296
Dominion Status	...	...	296
Framing of Future Constitution for India	...	...	296
Separation of Executive and Judiciary	...	...	297
Defence	...	...	297
Indians Overseas	...	...	297
Indian Consular Service	...	...	298
Reform in the Indian States	...	...	298
War and Industrial Development	...	...	298
Rural Economic Development	...	...	298
<b>THE ALL INDIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE</b>			<b>299</b>
<b>ANNUAL SESSION—NAGPUR—27TH. DECEMBER 1939</b>			<b>299</b>
The Presidential Address	...	...	299
<b>RESOLUTIONS—2ND DAY—NAGPUR—28TH. DECEMBER 39</b>			<b>301</b>
Resolution on War	...	...	301
<b>RESOLUTIONS—3RD DAY—NAGPUR—29TH. DECEMBER 39</b>			<b>302</b>
Nationalistic Constitution of India	...	...	302
<b>THE ALL INDIA HINDU MAHASABHA</b>			<b>303</b>
<b>TWENTY FIRST SESSION—CALCUTTA—28TH TO 30TH DEC. '39</b>			<b>303</b>
The Welcome Address	...	...	303
India's Glorious Past	...	...	304
Downfall of Hindus	...	...	305
Moslem Division of India	...	...	307
The Presidential Address	...	...	311
<b>RESOLUTIONS—2ND DAY—CALCUTTA—29TH DECEMBER 1939</b>			<b>316</b>
The Communal Award	...	...	316
Sukkur Riots	...	...	317
<b>RESOLUTIONS—3RD DAY—CALCUTTA—30TH DECEMBER 1939</b>			<b>318</b>
N. W. F. Pr. Administration	...	...	318
The Bengal Ministry	...	...	318
The Hindu MIMTA	...	...	340

Defence of India & War	...	...	340
Dominion Status	...	...	341
League Demand of Royal Commission	...	...	341
Hindu Sangathan & Suddhi	...	...	341
Fundamental Rights	...	...	342
Other Resolutions	...	...	343
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—POONA—30th JULY 1939</b>			<b>342</b>
Suspension of Hyderabad Satyagraha	...	...	342
Amnesty	...	...	343
Hindu Party in the State	...	...	343
Tribute to Martyrs	...	...	343
Bhopal and Rampur	...	...	343
Release of Political Prisoners	...	...	344
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—BOMBAY—10TH SEPT. 1939</b>			<b>344</b>
The Hindu Mahasabha and War	...	...	344
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—BOMBAY—19TH NOV 1939</b>			<b>344</b>
The Sabha on Viceroy's Statement	...	...	344
Hindus and Congress	...	...	345
Labour and Capital	...	...	345
<b>THE ALL INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE</b>			<b>345</b>
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—BOMBAY—2ND &amp; 3RD JULY '39</b>			<b>345</b>
Indian Nationals Abroad	...	...	345
Palestine Arabs' Demands	...	...	346
Action Against Sir A. H. Ghaznavi	...	...	346
Muslims in States	...	...	346
Hyderabad Agitation	...	...	346
Home Ministers' Conference	...	...	347
Wardha Scheme	...	...	347
Muslims in Congress Provinces	...	...	347
<b>THE COUNCIL MEETING—NEW DELHI—27TH &amp; 28th AUG. '39</b>			<b>348</b>
Moslem League and War	...	...	348
League & Punjab Premier's Attitude	...	...	349
Communal problem	...	...	350
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—NEW DELHI—18th SEPT. '39</b>			<b>350</b>
The War Resolution	...	...	350
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—NEW DELHI—22ND OCT. '39</b>			<b>352</b>
The League on Viceroy's Statement	...	...	352
<b>THE JAMAAT-UL-ULAMA CONFERENCE</b>			<b>353</b>
<b>WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING—MEERUT—16TH TO</b>			
		18th SEPT. '39	<b>353</b>
Resolution on War	...	...	353
<b>THE ALL INDIA SHIA POLITICAL CONFERENCE</b>			<b>355</b>
<b>ANNUAL SESSION—CHAPRA—30TH TO 31st DECEMBER '39</b>			<b>355</b>

Demand for Joint Electorates	...	...	355
THE A. I. ANTI-COMMUNAL AWARD CONFERENCE			356
FOURTH SESSION—CALCUTTA 27TH AUG '39		...	356
The Welcome Address	...	...	356
Opening Address	...	...	356
Presidential Address	...	...	356
Sir Nripen Sircar's Address	...	...	357
Resolutions	...	...	358
THE U P. POLITICAL CONFERENCE			359
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION—MUTTRA—28TH & 29TH NOV. '39			359
The Presidential Address	...	...	359
RESOLUTIONS—2ND DAY—MUTTRA—29TH NOVEMBER '39			359
Indian States	...	...	359
The U P. Tenancy Bill	...	...	359
Constructive Programme	...	...	360
THE DELHI SOCIALIST CONFERENCE			360
ANNUAL SESSION—NEW DELHI—2ND & 3RD JULY '39			360
Presidential Address	...	...	360
SECOND DAY NEW DELHI—3RD JULY '39		...	361
Mr. Jal Prakash's Speech	...	...	361
Resolutions	...	...	362
THE AGRA ZAMINDARS' CONFERENCE			362
FIFTH SESSION—BENARES—1ST & 2ND JULY '39			362
The Presidential Address	...	...	362
SECOND DAY—BENARES—2ND JULY '39		...	364
Nawab Yusuf's Speech	...	...	364
Raja Maheshwar Dayal's Speech	...	...	365
Raja of Tirwa's Speech	...	...	365
Resolutions	...	...	365
Political Party	...	...	365
Coercive Measures	...	...	366
Agricultural Protection League	...	...	366
THE ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE			367
STANDING COMMITTEE RECEPTION AT SARGLI	...		367
Rani of Sangli's Speech	...	...	367
Rani Rajwade's Speech	...	...	367
THE AGRA PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE			367
Presidential Address	...	...	367
Resolutions	...	...	368
THE CALCUTTA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE			369
The Welcome Address	...	...	369
Presidential Address	...	...	369
The Secretary's Report	...	...	370

<b>RESOLUTIONS—2ND. DAY—CALCUTTA—26TH. NOVEMBER '39</b>	<b>370</b>
Hostel for College Girls	370
Control of Widows' Homes	370
Social Workers	371
Traffic in Women & Children	371
<b>THE MADRAS WOMEN'S CONFERENCE</b>	<b>372</b>
Dr. Maria Montessori's Speech	372
The Presidential Address	372
Resolutions—World Peace	373
Nursery Schools	373
Communal Amity	373
Literacy Campaign	374
Children's Welfare	374
Beggar Problem	374
<b>THE ANDHRA PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE</b>	<b>374</b>
The Presidential Address	374
<b>THE PUNJAB WOMEN'S CONFERENCE</b>	<b>377</b>
The Presidential Address	377
Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur's Speech	377
Resolutions	377
<b>THE DELHI WOMEN'S CONFERENCE</b>	<b>378</b>
The Presidential Address	378
Resolutions	378
<b>INDIA AND THE WAR CRISIS</b>	<b>379</b>
Gandhi's Statement	379
"Source of my Sympathy"	379
Congress Statement on War Crisis	381
Lord Zetland's Statement in Lords	381
Mahatma Gandhi on Lords' Debate	382
Pt. Jawharlal on Lords' Debate	382
Gandhi's Message to British People	383
Pt. Jawharlal's Message	384
A. I. C. C. Resolution on War	384
Gandhi's Comment on the A. I. C. C. Resolution	384
Declaration of His Excellency the Viceroy	384
Lord Zetland's Statement in the Lords	389
<b>VICEROYAL PRONOUNCEMENT CRITICISED</b>	<b>393</b>
Mahatma Gandhi's Statement	393
Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Statement	393
Azad-Nehru Statement	394
Rajagopalachariar's Statement	394
Mrs. Naidu's Statement	395
Working Committee's Statement	395
Indian Debate in the House of Commons	395
Sir Samuel Hoare's Speech	396
Statements on Sir Hoare's declaration	403
Mahatma Gandhi's Statement	403



Rajendra Prasad's Statement	...	403
Indian Debate in House of Lords	...	404
Lord Samuel's Speech	...	404
Lord Zetland's Speech	...	408
Text of Viceregal Statement and Correspondence	...	410
Lord Zetland on Failure of Delhi Talks	...	411
Debate in the House of Commons	...	414
Comments on the Viceregal Statement on Delhi Talks	...	414
Mahatma Gandhi's Statement	...	414
Statement by the Congress President	...	415
Pandit Nehru's Statement	...	416
Shri C Rajagopalachariar's Reply to Lord Zetland	...	420
EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN INDIA		421
ALL INDIA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE		422
FIFTY-SECOND SESSION—LUCKNOW—27TH. TO 31ST. DEC. '39		422
The Welcome Address	...	422
Pandit Nehru's Opening Speech	...	422
The Presidential Address	...	423
RESOLUTIONS—LUCKNOW—30TH. DEC. '39	...	424
Wardha Scheme Accepted	...	424
ALL INDIA MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE		426
FIFTY-SECOND SESSION—CALCUTTA—29TH. TO 31ST. DEC. '39		426
The Welcome Address	...	426
The Presidential Address	...	426
Islamic Ideal & Nationalism	...	426
Resolutions	...	427
RESOLUTIONS—SECOND DAY—CALCUTTA—30TH. DEC. '39		427
University for Frontier	...	427
Wardha Scheme Criticised	...	427
Education of Muslim Women	...	427
RESOLUTIONS—THIRD DAY—CALCUTTA—31ST. DEC. '39		428
Plea for Industrial Training	...	428
THE CONVOCAATION ADDRESSES		428
S. N. THACKERSEY WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE GURUKUL UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE BOMBAY UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE ANDHRA UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE MYSORE UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE TRAVANCORE UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE PATNA UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE MUSLIM UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE OSMANIA UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE RANGOON UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE PUNJAB UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428
THE BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY CONVOCAATION		428



# Chronicle of Events

JULY—1939

**Chief Events**—Hunger-strike of Political Prisoners in Bengal—Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose's revolt against the Congress and threat of "Civil War"—Announcement of a new constitution for Hyderabad State—Pandit Jawaharlal's visit to Ceylon.

1st. Mahatma Gandhi gave his advice in the *Harjan*, that where there was an opposition in a mixed gathering, the Congress flag should not be hoisted. His advice applied to the singing of "*Bande Mataram*". The Mahatma said: "Opposition whenever it is offered is fomenting communal discussions. Surely it is wisdom on the part of those who treasure the flag and unite to submit to the opposition of a minority" however small it might be.

Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the decision of the All-India Congress Committee to send Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Ceylon, and hoped that the differences between the two countries would be honourably settled.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed his view on the South Africa resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee, that mere learning and mere humanitarianism divorced from actual experience might spell disaster to the cause sought to be espoused.

Rani Pritam Kunwari Sahaba of Bahaspur Bilari, addressing as the President of the fifth session of the Agra Province Zemindars' Conference at Benares urged the landholders to unite. She also said, "In 1833, Sir Malcolm (now Lord) Hailey, while replying to the deputations of the Jhansi Khatriya Sabha, remarked that authority under the new constitution will rest on those who best know how to organize themselves to grasp it"—Those were very wise words.

Mr. B. G. Kher, Premier of Bombay in the course of his address at the Convocation of the Indian Women's (Karve) University, said: "For the bulk of women, motherhood and household work are bound to continue to be the more important, nay the most important part of their work in life. If this is so, our educational system must mould itself according to our needs". He also remarked, "The influence of women is one of the most important factors in social reform."

At a meeting of the Sind Cabinet, it was decided that Government would take possession of the premises of *Om Mandali* and *Om Nivas*, as the inmates of the institutions failed to obey the order to vacate within a month.

A memorial in connexion with the situation in the Hyderabad State and the arrests of Arya Samajists there, was submitted to H. E. the Viceroy. The memorial was signed by 90 prominent Hindus, including Raja Narendra Nath, Sir P. C. Roy, Sir C. Y. Chintamani & others.

2nd. The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League in Bombay, under the presidency of Mr. M. A. Jinnah, considered the decision of the Princes not to join the Federation under the terms offered, the position of Indians abroad, and the general situation in the country, with particular reference to Muslims—a committee was appointed for the collection of funds for the relief of the Arab sufferers in Palestine.

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, addressing a meeting in Bombay, held under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial League, expressed his appreciation of the League organization in Bombay and said that though it was comparatively easier to organize a minority community, there was difficulty in organizing a majority community. In the same meeting, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, Bengal, deplored the lack of co-operation from the press in his province, which, he said, not only did not assist the Government but were definitely hostile to them.

Jaharna Nathoo, Doo, presiding at the Delhi Socialists' Conference, made an appeal to Socialists not to weaken the Congress but to protect the organization from those who wanted to undermine its influence and prestige.

Pandit Bham Raja Wipulanikar, Secretary, Hyderabad Sahayaka Samiti in the Deccan, speaking at a public meeting at Latur, warned that the Arya

Samaj would start a Satyagraha campaign in the Punjab if the local Government "persisted in its attempt to suppress the Hyderabad Satyagraha movement by taking action under the Princes Protection Act."

Mr. C. H. M. Rustomji presided over a meeting of Parsis in Calcutta, in which a resolution protesting against the Bombay Government's decision to introduce total prohibition in the City of Bombay from August 1, was adopted unanimously.

Professor B. M. Barua presided over a meeting of Buddhists in Calcutta, which considered how Buddhist interests in Bengal might be best secured and promoted.—It was unanimously resolved that the Buddhists of Bengal should seek the representation, which was their due, in the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Council and other public bodies and should henceforth be properly educated and organized for a more vigorous expression of their opinion in connexion with their civil rights and duties.

In Bihar, the Co-operative Rehabilitation Committee submitted several suggestions to accentuate the progress of the co-operative movement in Bihar..... It was recommended that Rupees one crore out of Rs. 1.80 lakhs due from members of societies should either be written off or remitted.

3rd. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party, addressing the Delhi Socialist Conference explained the aims and objects of the Party and denied the impression held in some quarters that the Socialists wanted to create a split in the Congress.

The Working Committee of the All-India Moslem League reviewed the work of the Ministries in the Congress-governed provinces with particular reference to the conditions of Moslems there. The Committee also discussed the Federal Scheme. The Committee decided to advise the Moslems in Jaipur to call off the civil disobedience movement, condemn the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha activities in Hyderabad State and call upon the provincial Governments and the paramount Power to check the movement.

The Government of India (Department of Education, Health and Lands) forwarded a statement to the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association, Bombay setting forth the position of Indians in Mauritius.—The most important recommendations in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into labour unrest on sugar estates in Mauritius related to the necessity for the formation of a department of labour and the enactment of suitable legislation in place of the Labour Ordinance of 1922 which mainly dealt with indentured labour. Both recommendations have been given effect to. An experienced officer has been appointed as the Director of Labour and a Labour Ordinance has been enacted.

A serious riot occurred in a jute mill at Garulia, near Calcutta, in the course of which 5 Europeans were besieged in the office building. Two members of the mill were slightly injured.

Sr. Subhas Chandra Bose announced the personnel of the Working Committee of the Forward Block from Bombay. Sr. Bose—President, Sardar Sardul Singh (Panjab)—Vice-President, Lal Shankarlal of Delhi—General Secretary, Pandit Biswambhardayal Tripathi, M.L.A. and Mr. K. F. Nariman Secretaries.

The General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee issued a circular from Allahabad to Secretaries of Provincial Congress Committees stating that it had come to his notice that subordinate Congress Committees in various places passed resolutions calling in question the decision of the A. I. C. C. If subordinate organisations went to the length of questioning the authority of the superior organization, there would be no discipline left in the Congress organization. He, therefore, requested all Provincial Congress Committees to warn Congress Committees subordinate to them, against all such undesirable activities.

4th. Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha sent a circular to the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha from Bombay, stating that the All-India Kisan Sabha came to the decision that the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee adopted at its Bombay session banning any form of Satyagraha of Congressmen without the permission of the provincial Congress Committees would not be binding on Kisan workers, whether they were Congressmen or not.

Sr. Bikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, speaking at a luncheon party in Bombay, stressed the need for drawing up an alternative scheme of Federation to the one submitted in the Government of India Act. The present

federal scheme, he said, had already been criticised and rejected by the parties concerned. The majority community did not like it because the scheme did not go far enough; the Princes contended that the scheme would not suit them because it would give opportunities to the centre to interfere in internal affairs; and the minorities argued that the present scheme was likely to give such vast powers not only to a political party but to a communal majority.

The President of the All-India Muslim League issued a statement from Bombay setting forth the conclusions of the meeting of the Working Committee in Bombay.—The Committee considered the correspondence that passed between Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Syed Abdur Rauf Shah Sahib regarding the appointment of a Muslim Minister in C. P. The Committee was of opinion that no individual province should negotiate or come to any settlement with the Congress with regard to the Hindu Muslim question in its area and that if any such proposals were received from the Congress, intimation should be sent to the effect that the matter should be referred by the Congress to the President or the Working Committees of the All-India Muslim League.

- 5th. The Government of Bengal constituted a committee, consisting of 18 members, to consider the draft statutes framed by Government provisionally, for the proposed General Council and State Faculty of Unani Medicine.

Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Mr. Mahadeo Desai, left for the Frontier Province, from Bombay.

- 6th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, sent a telegram to S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose stating, "I am surprised to read your statement fixing July 9 for protesting against the All-India Congress Committee's resolution on Satyagraha. I hope that you as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, will please promote discipline in the Congress by cancelling the proposed meetings."—Dr. Prasad issued a statement on the subject. It contained a warning that defiance of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee would amount to a breach of discipline and lead to disruption of the Congress Organization.

The Government of Bengal, in the course of a Press Communiqué, refuted the rumour that they decided to non-co-operate with the National Planning Committee.

At Lucknow, the police made a lathi charge and fired three volleys on a crowd of Shias at Imambara Asafi, when a big crowd attempted to attack the Tila mosque following the arrest of Maulana Syed Muhammad for publicly reciting the Tabarra.

- 7th. S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose replied to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, that he could not call off the meetings arranged for voicing opposition to the All-India Congress Committee's decision on the Satyagraha issue.—In a telegram to Dr. Rajendra Prasad he said, "I am surprised at your objection to our constitutional and democratic right to protest against these resolutions and mobilize Congress opinion. In our previous statement we appealed to the Working Committee to hold the resolution in abeyance. Regret very much we cannot call off the All-India Day on July 9."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru issued a statement on the above and remarked among other things, "At any time it would have been a dangerous proposition carrying within it powerful elements of disruption and disintegration. To put it forward to-day, with the world hanging over the brink of a crisis, is to be guilty of most amazing shortsightedness."

In the Bengal Assembly, when the debate on the Calcutta Municipal Bill, as amended by the Bengal Council, was resumed, the Nawab Bahadur of Baccu, Minister for Local Self-Government moved an amendment for the restoration of a clause of the Bill, as passed by the Assembly, relating to the nominated seats in the Corporation.

Some of the political prisoners in the Dum Dum jail resorted to a hunger-strike in order to secure "immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and restoration of civil liberties."

The Information Officer to the Government of Bihar issued a Government resolution, announcing the joint plan of the Governments of Bihar and United Provinces to establish a power alcohol industry in those two provinces.

- 8th. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Kanjan*, "If any mass movement is undertaken at the present moment in the name of non-violence it will involve defeat into

violence—largely unorganised and organised in some cases." The Mahatma recalled the past agitations conducted by Congress and said that he should declare from the housetops that the non-violence of those days fell far short of the non-violence he had so often defined. He expressed the belief that a non-violent mass movement was an impossibility, unless the prevailing atmosphere was radically changed.

Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement from Abbotabad, advising the Bengal political prisoners not to resort to a hunger strike.

The Bombay Congress executive issued instructions to the Congressmen to take no part in S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose's "Protest Day" against certain decisions of the All-India Congress Committee.

In Madras, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, member of the Congress Working Committee, at the end of a speech, regretted that things in the Congress had almost reached breaking point, but he hoped that no further development would take place and that there would not be any further division in the Congress ranks. He appealed to the people to have complete faith in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.

- 9th. The Government of Assam issued an official resolution, deciding to refer certain matters arising out of the Digoal strike, and the events related thereto to a Committee of inquiry under the presidency of Sir Manmathanath Mukherjee.

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee adopted a resolution deploring two resolutions passed at the Bombay meeting of the All-India Committee, one banning satyagraha by individual Congressmen without the permission of the Provincial Congress Committees and the other regarding Congress Ministries.—S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose made an appeal on behalf of the "Left Consolidation Committee" for the observance of an "All-India Day".

When S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose issued his appeal, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, sent a telegram to him asking him to withdraw it and also issued a statement that opposition of the A. I. C. C. decisions in the proposed manner would go against the interests of discipline and would weaken the organization. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also issued a statement agreeing with the views expressed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

At the annual meeting of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, Mr. Shew Kishen Bhattar, in his presidential speech, made a retrospect of condition in the world during the past year, the effect of the Burma riots, the far reaching changes in India through the introduction of autonomous Provincial Governments and a strong criticism of the procedure of legislation in subjects of trade and commerce.

Mahatma Gandhi held a consultation with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan at Abbotabad, when the general situation in the Frontier Province, with special reference to the purification of the Congress organization was discussed.

- 10th. In Monghyr district, disciplinary action was taken by the local Congress Committee against seven Congressmen for having worked against Congress instructions and its official nominees during the District Board elections.

S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose, in the course of a statement to the Press, discussed the prohibition scheme of the Government of Bombay and doubted whether it would be a success.

S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose, addressing a large gathering at Poona, declared, "I am not afraid of disciplinary action. I am prepared to face the consequences."

Sir Jogendra Singh, a former Punjab Minister, in a Press statement from Simla, pointed out, "The true way to gain much is never to desire to gain too much. There is no alternative to the federal scheme, as there is no option but to impose it. The time table of urgencies permits no evasion or postponement."

Mr. Hemendra Prasad Ghosh, Editor and Seahi Bhushan Dutt, printer and publisher of Basumati, a vernacular daily, who were charged with sedition in connexion with the publication of an article entitled "Kali Puja and Ramjan" on November 12, were acquitted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta.—There was a reference made by the Magistrate, which was heard by a special Bench of the Calcutta High Court and which held, that a Ministry could not be said to form part of the Executive Government of a province in the sense implied in section 17 of the Penal Code.

Meetings were held in many parts of India to protest against the A. I. C. C. decision on State Satyagraha and the relations between Congress Ministries and Provincial Congress Committees.



tion to the Hon'ble Dr. Saiyid Mahmud, Minister for Education on the first anniversary of the mass literacy campaign celebrated at Patna.

About 30 Muslim members of the U. P. Assembly met the Premier in the Council House at Lucknow and discussed with him the Tabarra-Madhe Sahaba controversy.

- 14th. The Ministers' Committee of the Council of Rulers under the Eastern States Agency met in Calcutta and completed their draft reply with regard to the States' accession to Federation.—The Ministers were unanimous in their draft reply.

A 20-year plan for the North west Frontier aiming at the pacification of the country and the elevation of its inhabitants, a suggestion made by Major W. E. Maxwell some years ago, was again put forward by him when he spoke in Simla on Frontier conditions.

The Government of Bombay issued detailed rules governing the prohibition programme to be forced in the city and suburbs of Bombay from August 1. The Government stated that on and after August 1, 1939, "No person shall have in his possession or shall import or bring into the prohibition area, any country or foreign liquor, toddy, hemp, drugs or opium except in accordance with orders issued by the Government."

- 15th. Mahatma Gaudhi, in the course of a statement from Abbottabad, observed, "Some women are inundating me with wires and letters about the hunger striking prisoners in Bengal. I fear my fair correspondents are damaging the cause they represent by expecting me to do what I cannot do. They are damaging it also by encouraging the hunger-strikers. I have no doubt that the hunger-strike is wrong. No prisoner should free himself from prison by refusing to take food. At the same time, I would urge the Bengal Government to put an end to this particular agitation by releasing the prisoners, although as I have admitted the prisoners have put themselves in the wrong by resorting to a hunger-strike. Their release is long over-due."

In the U. P. Assembly, there was a two-hour debate on the adjournment motion of Mr. Muhammed Isha Khan on the police firing on Moslems at Cawnpore on June 19. The motion was talked out.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Sylhet District Congress Committee, resolutions were adopted condemning the attitude of the capitalists and other "anti-national reactionary forces" towards the Congress Coalition Cabinet in Assam.

- 16th. A demonstration was held in Calcutta under the auspices of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee as a mark of sympathy with the political prisoners in the Dum Dum and Alipore Jails, who went on hunger-strike.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harizon* on Jaipur:—"Absence of civil disobedience does not mean cessation of agitation in some form or other for securing the rudiments of freedom for which the fight was undertaken."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee, issued a statement in reply to S. J. Subhas Ch. Bose's attack on the prohibition scheme of the Bombay Government:—"I was prepared for many things from Mr. Bose. Even his revolt against the Congress and his attempt to disrupt the national institution did not surprise me, as he had already threatened "Civil War" in his correspondence with Gandhiji. But I must confess to a feeling of amazement at the attitude he has thought fit to adopt towards the prohibition scheme of the Bombay Government. It should be clear to the meanest intelligence that the statement he has issued is distinctly unfriendly and, far from being constructive criticism, is intended to hinder the Ministry in its uphill struggle against vested interests."

- 17th. The Police of Dhami, a Punjab Hill State 14 miles from Simla, opened fire on a crowd that attempted to march on the palace of the Raja Sahib to present a petition for the redress of a number of their alleged grievances.

At a conference of Superintendents of Jails held at the Alipore Central Jail, Calcutta, certain important problems relating to reforms in the jail administration in Bengal were discussed. Lt. Col. M. A. Singh, I. M. S., Inspector General of Prisons, Bengal, presided.

Mr. B. G. Kher, Premier of Bombay, in the course of a statement on S. J. Bose's criticism of the Government's Prohibition policy said, "At a time when, in pursuance of the directions of the Indian National Congress, our Government



is launching on the noblest and most essential item of our programme of social reconstruction, namely, Prohibition, I am deeply pained to read the extraordinary statement issued by Mr. Subhas Bose."

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, addressing a gathering at Zaber Wada, Ahmedabad, declared: "Swaraj is no longer a dream. It will be achieved in a short time."

- 18th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, in a Press Statement issued from Ranchi, made an appeal to the political prisoners who were on hunger-strike in Bengal, to give up their fast; as also to the public and various organizations in the country to exert themselves to make the demand of the prisoners irresistible.

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, in the course of a statement from Ahmedabad, observed, "A wave of intolerance is now sweeping over the higher ranks of Congress leadership. The slightest criticism of any action of theirs throws them into a rage and the whole machinery of propaganda in their hands is at once put into operation. In this way the ordinary Congressman is terrorized into silence."

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, asked by Pressmen in Colombo, whether he would succeed in his mission to Ceylon, said, "Ceylon is far too small, you know, to stand alone. She must for the sake of her trade have contacts with other countries, and with what country should she have closer contacts than with India." Pandit Nehru added: "Your Ministers, however, do not seem to take a broad view of the question. Politically, that is, ideologically, Ceylon is very backward."

The second conference of Speakers and Presidents was held in Simla, under the Chairmanship of Sir Abdur Rahim, the President of the Central Assembly. The conference aimed at a greater degree of uniformity in conventions observed in the conduct of Legislatures all over India.

The Cochin Budget for 1939-40, revealed that the year was expected to close with a surplus of Rs. 5.08 lakhs.

- 19th. A new constitution for Hyderabad was announced. The authors of the scheme of reforms were the Reforms Committee appointed by the Nizam in September 1937, and the Executive Council which submitted final proposals on the Committee's report. The Nizam in a firman sanctioned the entire scheme. The constitutional position of the Ruler was defined as follows: "He is both the Supreme Head of the State and an embodiment of the peoples' Sovereignty." He not merely retains the power to confirm or veto any legislation but enjoys a special prerogative to make and unmake his Executive or change the machinery of Government." The Legislative Council was to be expanded into a Legislative Assembly of 85 members of which 28 would be nominated and 42 elected from constituencies representing economic rather than geographical or other interests. The principle of joint electorates was maintained. Hindus and Moslems were to be given equal representation in the Legislature. Other reforms included improved methods of recruitment to the public services, the extension of civil liberties within "legitimate bounds" and the appointment of a permanent representative body to guide the Government in religious affairs.

Students of most of the Calcutta Colleges and Schools resorted to a half-day strike to show their sympathy with the political prisoners on hunger-strike at Dam Dum and Alipore Central Jails, and to demand their release.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru made an appeal for friendship between India and Ceylon at a dinner given in his honour at Colombo, by Mr. H. S. Dasa, president of the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon.

- 20th. The non-official advisers in the Indo-Japanese trade negotiations met in Simla and continued their deliberations. They arrived at tentative conclusions in a large number of claims.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in an address to the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon, at Colombo, declared, "Whatever may be the result of my mission, I am glad I came to Ceylon, because I hope that my visit may help to remove the existing barriers of ill-feeling and suspicion and restore amity and understanding between Indians and Ceylonese."

Mr. Basilchand Dasa, Leader of the Opposition in the Central Assembly, arrived at Karachi, on his return from Europe. In an interview, Mr. Dasa remarked that tensions were considerably frayed in the whole of Europe, and the war was held to be fast advancing.

21st. A communique from Simla stated: "In response to a request made by certain Rulers of the Punjab States, His Excellency the Crown Representative has been pleased to extend to September next the time up to which a reply may be furnished to His Excellency's letter conveying to them the terms within which their accession to federation has been invited."

Unanimous recommendations on the terms on which the Indo-Japanese Trade Protocol should be renewed were embodied in a memorandum signed by the non-official advisers at Simla. The memorandum was forwarded to the Government of India.

Sir K. Nazimuddin, the Bengal Home Minister declared, "The Government will not deviate from their declared policy regarding the release of political prisoners because of the hunger-strike."

Presiding at a meeting in Calcutta, S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose called upon the Congress Working Committee to make the release of the political prisoners, on hunger-strike in Dum Dum and Alipore Jails, an All-India question by the resignation of Congress Ministers on that issue.—S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose referred to a resolution passed at the Calcutta session of the All India Congress Committee relating to the release of political prisoners, and said that the time had come when the Congress should make it a political issue of the first magnitude.

The General Council of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation discussed at Bombay, the question of an All-India strike of all railway labourers, in case their demand for admission to the Provident Fund scheme was not accepted by the authorities. Mr. Jannadas Mehta presided.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, Premier, Madras, defended the Temple-Entry Indemnity Ordinance and described it as a test of fitness for him.

22nd. His Excellency the Viceroy addressing the inaugural meeting of the Committee of the All-India Cattle Show Society at Simla, visualized the ultimate development of the Society into a Central organisation in India directing and assisting similar efforts in the various Provinces and States, fostering the highest standards in breeding and management and setting the seal of its approval upon the careful and conscientious breeder, and including in its scope other animals of importance in India's rural economy, such as sheep, goats, camel and poultry.

A demonstration was held in Calcutta as a mark of sympathy with the political prisoners in the Dum Dum and Alipore Jails.—Following a rally of Congress workers, students and labourers, a procession was organized which paraded several streets, shouting slogans, demanding the release of political prisoners. A number of women also took part in the demonstration.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in a statement from Ranchi, said, "Public meetings should be organized and held throughout the country for reiterating the demand for the immediate release of political prisoners in Bengal."

Mr. Kiran Shankar Roy and Mr. Gopikabilas Sen, A. I. C. C. members from Bengal interviewed Dr. Rajendra Prasad at Ranchi, regarding differences between members belonging to rival groups in the Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Dr. Prasad expressed the view that the matter should be settled as far as possible by the Provincial Congress itself without outside interference.

S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose, Leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly, on receipt of a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi expressing his concern about the prisoners on hunger-strike in Calcutta jails, called on Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, Bengal and had a long discussion with him regarding the situation. Mahatma Gandhi asked S. J. Bose to exert all his influence to persuade the prisoners to give up hunger-strike.

In the U. P. Assembly, the Moneylenders' Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, was passed.

The Bihar Kisan Council at their meeting at Patna, expressed sympathy for prisoners on hunger-strike in two provinces—political prisoners in Bengal and Kisans in Bihar.

23rd. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, former President of the States' People's Conference, interviewed at Coomana, regarding the Hyderabad reforms scheme, said, "The Hyderabad Reforms Scheme Report and the Government orders thereon are as pompous and pedantic as the White Paper or the Joint Parliamentary Committee report on India reforms. They appear to embrace every aspect of political development and every problem of constitutional democracy that is conceivable in modern times. Hyderabad can wait for reforms for a decade provided that

liberties are granted in full forthwith. But if civil liberties are not granted, any scheme of reforms, however well meant, is bound to prove so much window-dressing."

Sir N. N. Sircar, presiding over the annual meeting of the Women's Protection League, Bengal, in Calcutta, said that the time had come, when reforms were needed in the matter of protecting the rights of women and raising their status in society.

Sardar Patel, addressing a gathering of Congress workers of Nadiad, Ahmedabad, declared: "The prestige of the Congress inside and outside the country lies in her moral strength. Many self-seeking persons are trying to enter the Congress as she is capturing power. It is time to cleanse the Congress if the country is not to be polluted."

Calcutta carters took out a procession of carts half a mile long as a protest against the Government's policy towards political prisoners.

In the Tata Iron and Steel Company at Jamshedpur, an understanding was reached in the long-standing dispute between labour and management, and the terms of reference which had been referred to arbitration by Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Jawharlal Nehru were agreed upon.

- 24th. Nawab Bahadur Sir A. K. Ghuznavi, formerly member of the Bengal Executive Council and a Minister, died in Calcutta.

The Committee appointed by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, with Dewan Bahadur K. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar as its chairman, to recommend to the Government constitutional reforms for the State observed, "We believe that responsible government under the aegis of the Ruler should be the objective towards which all constitutional progress is directed. Such progress will necessarily have to be by stages, the measure of each advance being dependent on the judgment of the Ruler."

In the United Provinces, a fillip was sought to be given to the mass literacy drive in the province by the Rural Development and Education Departments of the U. P. Government by launching a "Read more books" campaign.

- 25th. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in reply to questions by pressmen in Madras, where he arrived from Ceylon, declared, "I cannot definitely say now what the results of my visit to Ceylon are going to be, but in regard to the particular matter for which it seems to exist at present."

The Government of Orissa, through the Development Department, gave all encouragement to the cultivators of Kendrapara subdivision to grow more jute.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Dewan President of the Travancore Legislative Assembly made a statement that Travancore's entry into Federation would be on terms of absolute equality with any other unit of the Federation.

The Premier of Bengal wrote to Dr. Rajendra Prasad in reply to the latter's letter, that if the prisoners abandoned the hunger-strike, he was hopeful of the process of release being speeded up.

- 26th. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu arrived in Calcutta, and referring to the situation created by the hunger-strike by the political prisoners in Dum Dum and Alipore Jails addressed an appeal to the men to give up their fast. She said: "I make an earnest and urgent appeal to the political prisoners to end their self-imposed agony of a prolonged hunger-strike, and to be patient a brief while only for their release to be ensured."

The main recommendation of the Orissa States' People's Inquiry Committee report was, "In view of the inherent inability of the Orissa States to support popular enlightened administrations within their areas, which are the *sine qua non* of any satisfactory re-arrangement, and in view of the inevitability of a strong and irresistible popular demand from the people of these States for rights of self-Government and self-determination, the sanads granted to the Rulers of States by the Paramount Power should be cancelled and they may be treated as landlords of permanently settled estates such as Aul, Kulung and Kumbha."

The Bombay Provincial Muslim League Committee, which met under the presidency of Mr. M. A. Jinnah, adopted a resolution calling upon all members of the Muslim League to sever their connections with other political organisations.

- 27th. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, speaking at the first meeting of the Congress, announced that although the year was not yet over, the Congress had achieved an extraordinary success.

of friendliness between Indians and Ceylones, and, taking a long view of things, he was inclined to be optimistic.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived at New Delhi, and left for Wardha in the evening. He presided over the first convocation of the Industrial Harijan Home at the Harijan Colony.

Sri Subhas Chandra Bose visited the political prisoners on hunger-strike in the Alipore and Dum Dum Jails. He subsequently issued a statement in which he said that he would communicate his impressions of the Jail interview as well as his views on the present situation to the Home Minister, Bengal.

The Gujrat Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting, with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the chair, adopted a resolution appealing to the Bengal Government to release the political prisoners without any delay. The Committee also requested the political prisoners to give up their strike.

Mrs Vijaylakhmi Pandit, Minister for Local Self-Government, U. P., addressed a public meeting at Cawnpore. The meeting passed a resolution demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the Bengal Political prisoners and requesting the latter to give up their strike.

An important conference of officials was held at the residence of the Premier of Orissa (Cuttack) to discuss questions connected with the proposed hydro-electric scheme for the utilization of the Bagara water-falls in Jeypore district.

The Indian Tea Association stated in a communique, "The Indian Tea Association and the Government of Assam have made it perfectly clear that they have no wish to enter into any Press controversy with regard to the investigations of the Assam Tea Garden Labour Inquiry Committee, but as certain publications circulating in Assam are printing statements which are untrue the Indian Tea Association feel that it is desirable to make their position perfectly clear. The Indian Tea Association agreed to the Tea Garden Inquiry Committee and so far from boycotting it endeavoured to cooperate to the fullest extent."

The General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Committee asking him to send the names of the members of the Executive Council of the Provincial Congress Committee, as also members of the Committee, who joined in the meetings and demonstrations held on July 9, as a protest against the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. at its Bombay meeting regarding individual Satyagraha and criticism of Congress Ministries.

29th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, at a meeting held under the auspices of the Bombay Congress at Bombay, expressed the view that the situation arising out of the hunger-strike by the political prisoners in Bengal did not warrant the resignation of all Congress Ministries. Mr. Bhulabhai Deasal presided over the meeting.

Two members of the Polish mountaineering expedition, which made a successful attack on the Eastern Peak of Nanda Devi, were killed by an avalanche.

Following an anti-Reforms demonstration by Moslems, five persons were killed and fifty injured in a Hindu Moslem clash at Dholepet, a suburb of Hyderabad City.

The first All-India and Burma Mayors' conference was inaugurated by Mr. R. K. Sidhwa, Mayor of Karachi, in the presence of a large gathering including Pir Illahi Bux, Minister for Local Self-Government, Mr. Jamshed Mehta and other ex-Mayors of Karachi.

Under the C. P. Government sanctioned scheme to establish 200 Vidya Mandirs, Schools were started at Nagpur.

29th. Mahatma Gandhi said in the *Harijan*, "It will be a mistake for the Paramount Powers or the Princes to ignore the Congress—a body under whose shadow the people of the States from the commencement have been accustomed to grow and flourish. The Congress must guide them. How can people who are one in blood and bound together by the closest social and economic ties be artificially kept apart for any length of time?" "No doubt," he added, "the Congress will have to recognize its own limitations. It can hope to work with effect only if its work is of a friendly and peaceful nature. It has to hold the scales even between the parties."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, arrived in Calcutta and learned from Dr. Pratulla Chandra Ghosh, a member of the Congress Working Committee, the latest developments in connection with the hunger-strike. The Congress President then visited Sri Subhas Chandra Bose and Sri Sanku Chandra Bose and had a talk with them on the subject. Dr. Prasad accompanied

by Mr. Mahadeo Desai visited the Alipore Jail, when they had a long interview with the prisoners. Later, they visited the Dum Dum Jail and met the prisoners there.

Mrs. Sorojini Naidu addressed the Dacca University Convocation, in which Sir John Woodhead, the Chancellor, presided. Mrs. Naidu observed that the country had received a definite set back in the matter of mass education during the course of the last century and the percentage of illiteracy was definitely larger now than what it was years ago. Here was, she said, a splendid field of service, which many of the graduates passing out of the Dacca University would be wise to avail themselves of.

Mr. Biswanath Das, the Premier of Orissa, stated in an interview that Orissa province always wanted the co-operation of the Orissa States in the development of "Greater Orissa" and the advancement of Oriya Culture.

Mr. Harekrishna Mahatab, member of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress, in an interview at Cuttack, suggested the setting up of a Common High Court and other common institutions for British Orissa and the States as the only immediate solution for the States' problems which were "wrought with potential dangers."

80th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, accompanied by Dr. B. C. Roy, Mr. Mahadev Desai and Sriyat Sarat Chandra Bose, had another interview with the hunger-strikers in the Dum Dum Jail. The interview was followed by a visit by the Congress President, Dr. Roy and Mr. Desai to Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, Bengal.

Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy and Mr. Satin Sen resigned from the Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, elected on July 28.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan's alternative "regional" scheme of Federation, was claimed to be an attempt to solve political and communal problems by meeting various criticisms, levelled against the scheme embodied in the Government of India Act. It was claimed for the scheme that it would enable British Indian and Indian State units to enter Federation on almost identical terms, and that it provided a wider latitude both to Indian provinces and Indian States of developing their own benefit. It also provided for the association of Indians in matters pertaining to defence and external affairs from the very outset.

Tehri village, in Kohat district, was raided—one person was killed and two injured, while two shops were set on fire and 20 looted.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League in the course of a state in Bombay, reiterated the League's opposition to the Federal Scheme. Mr. Jinnah appealed to Lord Linlithgow and His Majesty's Government not to force the Federal constitution "upon an unwilling India and in the teeth of opposition."

81st. His Excellency Lord Linlithgow arrived in Cuttack; the visit being the first to be paid by a Viceroy to Orissa, since its establishment as a separate province. Speaking at a banquet in the Cuttack Club, the Viceroy made special reference to relations between the people of Orissa and those of the neighbouring Eastern States. His Excellency said, "Provinces and States are, and must always be neighbours. They have each their own part to play in the progress of India, but the parts must be played in harmony, and not in dissonance."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in a statement on the outcome of the efforts made by him and by Mr. Mahadev Desai to persuade the political prisoners to give up their fast and also to secure their release, observed, "We found complete deadlock. We are going away wholly disappointed."

At the stroke of midnight, Prohibition was formally inaugurated in Bombay and suburbs by the authorities who sealed stocks of liquor and other intoxicants left over after the evening's merry-making in clubs and restaurants. The eve of Prohibition passed off without incident.

At the first meeting of the Bengal provincial branch of the Forward Bloc held in Calcutta, B. K. Chakrabarti was elected President and Mr. Satya Ranjan Bhattacharya as Secretary.

The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, at its meeting at Calcutta, resolved to support the Hyderabad Sahayaka campaign for the time being, the action to be taken to bring out how the Muslim Government treats the non-Muslim population of the Hindu subjects in the actual execution of the campaign. Mr. V. B. Sahasrabudhe presided at the meeting.

## AUGUST—1939

**Chief Events :—**Prohibition inaugurated in Bombay—Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose disqualified from Congress membership by the A. I. C. C.—Congress Assembly Members decided to abstain from attending the Simla Session—Laying of the foundation stone of the Mahajati Sadan in Calcutta by Dr. Tagore.

1st. In Bombay, five people were injured when the police opened fire on an unruly crowd which formed part of a procession organized to protest against the Urban Immovable Property Tax and the Sales Tax. The incident marred the introduction of prohibition which was celebrated by a public holiday and meetings and processions in various parts of the city and its suburbs.

In the morning a mammoth rally of Prohibition Guards was held on the Gowalior Tank maidan. Mr. B. G. Kher, the Premier took the salute at the march past. Another procession, led by Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, President of the Provincial Congress Committee ended at the Tilak statue at Chaupatty. There Mr. Desai unfurled the Congress flag and garlanded the statue. All the Ministers were present.

His Excellency the Viceroy granted interviews to the Raja of Dhenkanal and the Raja of Talcher; discussion at these interviews centred round the constitution, population and industries of their respective States.

Resolutions were passed requesting the Government of Bengal to release the political prisoners and urging the Government of Assam to release Rani Gaidalu at several public meetings held at Jharia, Dhubri, Gauhati and Shillong.

A meeting called by the City Congress Committee at Lucknow, to celebrate the death anniversary of Lokmanya B. G. Tilak, was made the occasion for an anti-Congress demonstration by small groups belonging to the Hindu Sabha and the Moslem League and by Shia workers.

The Tilak Day meeting held under the auspices of the Congress at Kurnool (Madras), broke up in panic.

2nd. Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement issued at Wardha on the hunger-strike of the political prisoners in Bengal, said, that "this fast is not justified" and that "their refusal to give it up will embarrass the Congress Working Committee in taking any action".

Mr. S. Satyamurthi, M. L. A., at a meeting in Madras, declared: "Mr. Gandhi's leadership is essential, and he who seeks to weaken his hold on our people is an enemy of the country." Referring to the internal crisis in the Congress, Mr. Satyamurthi urged that the All-India Congress Committee should take disciplinary action against Congressmen or Congress Committees who had defied the Congress constitution.

Bombay City returned to normal after the previous day's rioting.

The Conciliation Board, which was appointed with Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee as chairman in connection with the Digboi labour dispute, failed to effect a compromise.

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal gave his assent to the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill, 1939. The measure restored the system of separate electorates. The strength of the Council was increased from 92 to 99.

In the C. P. Assembly, a Bill seeking to amend the C. P. Primary Education Act, 1920, was passed.

3rd. The 89 political prisoners who were on hunger-strike in the Dum Dum and Alipore jails since July 7, decided to suspend their fast for two months. This decision followed an appeal by Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose who, in a statement, said that the prisoners agreed to give up their fast as the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee had undertaken to conduct a campaign for their release. He said that he was also informed that the Bengal Government hoped that it would be able to finish consideration of the cases of these prisoners and pass orders on them within the next two months.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a meeting at Jamshedpur stated that the present was a time when the world was undergoing a change—a revolution of a type, the like of which it was generally agreed, had never before been witnessed. There was, however, something curious about this change. Not all change was voluntary. World tendencies had to be taken into account,

certain things they did, others they were made to do, how and why they did not know. That was the unaccountable factor.

- 4th. Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, Bengal, in the course of a statement on the suspension of the hunger-strike by political prisoners in the Dum Dum and Alipore Jails, observed, "The Government have accepted no time limit within which the prisoners are to be released, nor is there any understanding expressed or implied, between the Government and any third party regarding such a time limit."

The two main Hindu political organizations in Bengal were amalgamated : the reconstituted body to be known as the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha. The merger, which was effected at a meeting of representatives of the Bengal Hindu Sabha and the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha, was confirmed at a meeting of the executive committee of the latter body in Calcutta.

Mr. Biswanath Das, Premier of Orissa, issued a statement, re : Estates Land Act Amendment Bill—"It is now fairly clear that the talks with the zemindars over the Madras Estates Land Act Amendment Bill have failed. The Governor-General has to decide whether or not assent is to be given to the Bill as passed by the Orissa Assembly."

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Town Congress Committee and members of the Congress Municipal party at Puri, it was decided not to participate in any functions in connexion with B. Subhas Chandra Bose's visit to Puri.

The joint session of both Houses of the Assam Legislature passed the Agricultural Income Tax Bill sponsored by the Government by 65 votes to 56.

Mahatma Gandhi in a letter advised Shias to withdraw the civil resistance campaign in Lucknow.

The conference of Provincial Ministers for Local Self-Government concluded at Bombay. The conference unanimously supported the principle of adult franchise in local bodies, while it felt that the question whether these should be joint or separate electorates should be left to the provinces concerned, to be determined individually.

- 5th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, speaking on the political situation in Bombay, expressed the view that democracy was unsuited to the genius of India.

Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harjan*, advised the States' subjects to approach the Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples' Conference for guidance.

Dr. Moonje, a member of the Army Indianization Committee, addressing students of the Mysore University, made an appeal to the young men of Mysore to undergo military training in order to be ready to defend their country.

- 6th. His Excellency the Viceroy left New Delhi on a tour of the South-eastern Punjab primarily to see what was done and the works in progress for relief of the acute famine conditions in the Hissar and the neighbouring districts.

Mr. S. Satyamurthi, M. L. A. (Central) in the course of a speech "On Indian Nationalism and Geographical India" at a meeting in Bombay said, "Unless the States entered the Federation, he saw no future for them." He also said, "The Forward Bloc is not helping the struggle against British Imperialism. It is only helping the enemies of the Congress and of the country. The best friends of the Bloc in the country to-day are mostly communalists, anti-prohibitionists and disgruntled Congressmen."

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru addressing Congress organizers and other Congress workers at Allahabad, observed that the conflicting ideologies obtaining in the country, unless directed into proper channels would lead to disintegration of the country.

- 7th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad (Congress President) and Pandit Jawharlal Nehru who had been appointed to arbitrate on certain points in the dispute between the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union, gave their award at Patna.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab said in an interview, "My federal scheme constitutes an attempt to solve difficulties, both communal and political, which the parties concerned apprehend in the smooth working of the federal scheme as embodied in the Government of India Act."

The Mysore Reforms Committee concluded discussion of its draft report, which carried the authority of a substantial majority.

The Committee appointed by the Bombay Government to enquire into the working of the Criminal Tribes Act recommended relaxation with regard to restrictions imposed on criminal tribes.

The U. P. Congress Council at Lucknow, adopted a resolution to the effect that office-bearers of Congress bodies should not participate in demonstrations against the declared policy of the Congress. Meetings were held at Lucknow under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

- 8th. The Excise Commissioner of the Travancore State observed in the State Upper House, that the Travancore Government's policy was to achieve complete prohibition through a well-regulated temperance campaign.

The Arya Satyagraha in Hyderabad was discontinued. Mr. M. S. Aney, M. L. A. (Central), in a Press interview, stated, "I must express my admiration for the spirit of conciliation shown by the Government of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, particularly Sir Akbar Hydari, in meeting the religious demands of the Arya Samajists and Hindus."—An official communique from Hyderabad contained a clarification of certain points in the official communique of July 17, 1939 in which the Government's attitude regarding the religious liberties in the state was set out as well as of the points raised by the Government Gazette Extraordinary on July 19, 1939, announcing the reforms.

Mr. Ashrafuddin Chowdhury, Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, sent a letter to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in reply to inquiries made by the Congress President about a meeting of Executive of the Bengal Congress on July 9, when a protest against certain decisions of the All-India Congress Committee was recorded. Mr. Chowdhury said: "The meeting was held under of the President of the B. P. C. C. and as such the question of discipline does not arise, because the B. P. C. C. executive or the B. P. C. C. organization as a whole is responsible and should be responsive to the orders of the president of the B. P. C. C."

During S. Subhas Chandra Bose's stay at Cuttack, when he presided at the All-Orissa Youths' conference, some Congress leaders, followers of Mahatma Gandhi, including Mr. Hare Krishna Mahatab, member of the Working Committee and Mr. Biswanath Das, Premier of Orissa met S. Bose and had long discussions on the formation of the Forward Bloc. The leaders appealed to S. Bose to give up the attitude he had taken up in "rebelling against the Congress" as such a course would introduce disruptive forces in the Congress.

- 9th. The Rana of Dhami appointed a committee to hold an inquiry into the firing at Halog on July 16 and the events which led up to it.

The Working Committee of the Congress which began its session at Wardha, passed a resolution directing the Nagpur Provincial Congress Committee and the Congress Legislative Party to expel from membership Mr. A. N. Udhoji, a member of the City Assembly.

Dr. N. N. Law, in his presidential address at the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, discussed certain questions relating to the problem of industrialization of Bengal.

The Government of Bengal, in reviewing the reports on the working of the municipalities in the province in 1937-38, made a reference to lack of funds and in several cases party faction hampered the municipal administration.

The Government of India announced the constitution of a Sand-Stowing Board for ensuring safety in coal mines.

- 10th. The All-India Congress Working Committee at Wardha considered complaints received by the Congress President questioning the validity of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, when the old Executive Committee was dissolved and a new one was elected in its place.—No decision was taken on the subject.—The Committee passed a resolution on the Ceylon Government's policy with regard to the employment of Indian labour.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee issued a notice which was served on eleven members of the C. P. Congress Assembly Party, "to appear before the Working Committee at Wardha, tomorrow morning at 9 A. M. with all the evidence that you may have to substantiate the charges that you have preferred or, in case of failure to prove those charges, to give any explanation that you may think proper as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against you for having attributed such grave charges against your colleague." (Hon. Mr. Mian).

The annual report on the administration of the Factories Act in Bengal for 1938, stated that the number of factories on the register at the close of the year was 1,736.



The Assam Finance Bill, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly in April, was passed by the Upper House without division.

The League Committee on Allocation of Expenses appointed in 1938, recommended that India would pay about Rs. 20,000 less as her contribution to the League of Nations.

- 11th. The All-India Congress Committee disqualified S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose from Presidency of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and debarred him from membership of any elective Congress Committee for three years from August, 1939.—This action was taken owing to his "grave indiscipline" in organizing a day of protest, on July 9, against two resolutions passed by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting in Bombay in June.—The Working Committee also took note of the act of indiscipline of other Congress members who participated in the demonstrations but refrained from taking any action against them, as in the opinion of the Working Committee they acted under the inspiration of S. J. Bose. Provincial Congress Committees were, however, instructed that they were at liberty to take action against those members unless they expressed regret.—The decision of the Working Committee was received unfavourably by several prominent members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose, leader of the Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party, in an interview said, "I congratulate the Working Committee on their political wisdom." Mr. Nausher Ali, a former Bengal Minister, in an interview said, "In spite of all that has happened, Bengal could never conceive that the Congress High Command would go to the extent of taking disciplinary action against Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, the late President of the Indian National Congress. It may be doubted that if this action on the part of the Congress authorities is consistent with their claim of non-violence. Undoubtedly it smacks of intolerance."

All Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly were asked to stay away from the next session of the Assembly, as a protest against the despatch of troops abroad and the prolongation of the "life" of the Assembly by a year.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, sent a telegram to the Bengal Congress Committee directing that the Provincial Election Tribunal should cease functioning, pending the disposal of the complaint made against the election of a new executive council of the B. P. C. C.

As a result of the first stage of the inquiry into the allegations made by certain members of the C. P. Congress Legislative Party against Mr. D. P. Mishra, Minister, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai was requested to conduct a further inquiry into the subject at Nagpur.

The Bengal Government's decision to regulate jute acreage was conveyed in a communique. It was stated that the Government would be guided in the restriction of jute acreage by stocks at the end of the season and by a forecast of the demand.

- 12th. S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose, in a statement on the disciplinary action taken against him by the Congress Working Committee, said, "I welcome the decision of the Working Committee virtually expelling me from the Congress for three years. This decision is the logical consequence of the process of 'Right consolidation' which has been going on for the last few years and which has been accentuated by the acceptance of Ministerial office in the provinces."

Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harijan*, declared, "I am not all-powerful with the Ministers or with the Working Committee."

The movement among those Congressmen who believed in Mahatma Gandhi's creed and leadership to form a compact bloc took shape in the United Provinces. A provincial committee was formed to frame rules and evolve a plan of work. The Committee consisted of Acharya Kripalini, Mr. Mohanlal Saxena, Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal and 4 others.

The first session of the Working Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc began at the Calcutta residence of S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose, who presided.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan*, "From all accounts I have received it seems that Bombay surpassed itself on the 1st. of August, the day of the inauguration of prohibition."

The Congress Working Committee congratulated the Madras Government on the determination with which they passed the necessary legislation removing local obstacles in the way of Harijans entering Hindu temples for worship. The

Committee also congratulated the Bombay Government on the happy inauguration of Prohibition in Bombay. The Committee thanked the hunger-striking prisoners in Dum Dum and Alipore for suspending their strike for two months and urged on the Bengal Government for their early and unconditional release.

- 13th. Opposing views continued to be expressed by political leaders and newspapers in India on the Congress Working Committee's disciplinary action against S<sup>j</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose.—Mr. M. N. Roy, in a statement at Dehra Dun, said, that the resolution was unwise and bound to create difficulties. He held that a warning would have sufficed.—Dr. Satyapal of Lahore declared that the decision was "a challenge to the progressive elements in the Congress."—Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, in the course of a speech at Cuttack, said, "It is a very shocking and too drastic a decision. It would further widen instead of narrowing the gulf in the Congress organization, although unity is the supreme need at the present juncture."

The Working Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc, in Calcutta, discussed the resolution of the Congress Working Committee on disciplinary action. Representatives of the Left Consolidation Committee were invited to participate in the discussions.

Mr. Hem Chandra Barua, President of the Assam Congress Committee, contradicting a press message regarding the enlargement of the Assam Cabinet, said that the Provincial Congress Committee never made any request to the Congress Working Committee for permission to enlarge the Cabinet.

The resolution adopted by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on the hunger-strike by the political prisoners in Bengal jails, was criticized at a meeting in Calcutta. S<sup>j</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose presided.

Mr. C. N. Mathuranga Mudaliar M. L. A. (Central), presiding over the tenth Coimbatore District Political Conference at Bhabauti (Madras), deprecated the idea of forming separate parties or groups, inside the Congress, which, he said, would weaken the organization.

- 14th. The All-Orissa Youth Conference, under the presidency of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain at Cuttack, passed a resolution expressing grave concern over the disciplinary action taken by the Congress Working Committee against S<sup>j</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose.

Dr. R. M. Lohia, a member of the All-India Congress Committee, who was charged with sedition in connexion with a speech on "India and the coming War" delivered by him in English, in Calcutta, on April 5, was acquitted by Mr. R. Gupta, Chief Presidency Magistrate.

In pursuance of the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly, sent telegraphic instructions from Nagpur to Mr. Asaf Ali, one of the Secretaries of the party, asking the latter to issue a circular requesting the Congress members of the Assembly not to proceed to Simla in connexion with any legislative work, and to request all members serving on any committee or select committee to withdraw. This was done on the next day.

The Working Committee of the Forward Bloc, in Calcutta, passed resolution concerning the release of the political prisoners, the establishment of a volunteer organisation and boycott of foreign cloth. The resolution on political prisoners urged on the all-India Congress Executive to "create a country-wide constitutional crisis" if all the Bengal prisoners were not released within two months.

- 15th. The Working Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc at their meeting in Calcutta, passed a resolution characterizing the Congress disciplinary action against S<sup>j</sup> Subhas Chandra Bose as "unjust, uncalled for, vindictive and monstrous." The meeting after expressing full confidence in S<sup>j</sup> Bose, came to the conclusion that action had been taken "not merely for the consolidation of the Right and suppression of the Left, but appears at the same time as part of a plan for arriving at some sort of compromise over the Federal scheme through negotiations with British Imperialism."

Following the decision of the Congress Party to abstain from attending the Simla session of the Central Assembly, some members of the Congress Nationalist Party, if not the party as a whole, intended to stay away from the Assembly.

The Defence Department of the Government of India had under consideration the establishment of an Auxiliary Air Force on a basis similar to that on which volunteer Reserve Squadrons were being formed in Ceylon, Singapore, Hongkong and elsewhere.

The Hon'ble Dr. K. N. Katju, Excise Minister, explained the Prohibition policy of the United Provinces Government in an address to the Progressive Club.

- 16th. Sir Jogendra Singh, a former Punjab Minister and a member of the Army Indianization Committee, giving his impressions of his visit to Bombay, Poona, Bangalore, Mysore and Hyderabad, said that "there are some important States ready to join the Federation but are awaiting financial adjustments."

The Working Committee of the All-India Forward Bloc at their meeting in Calcutta, passed a resolution condemning Mahatma Gandhi's "new technique" in connexion with the agitation of the Indian States' subjects. Mahatma Gandhi's policy was characterized as a new form of moderatism.

In the Bombay Legislative Assembly, the Bill to amend the Bombay Land Revenue Code was discussed.

In the C. P. and Berar Assembly, two important legislative measures, the Harijan Temple Worship (Removal of Disabilities) Bill and the Vidya Mandir Bill were referred to Select Committees.

- 17th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, declared null and void the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee held in Calcutta on July 26, for the purpose of electing a new Executive Council for the Provincial Congress Committee. The Congress President also held the proceedings of the new Executive Council meeting, held on July 30 and the appointment by that body of the Election Tribunal as null and void. The reason for invalidating the B. P. C. C. meeting of July 26 was given as "want of sufficient and proper notice under the rules."

A meeting of Hindus held in Calcutta, to observe the "Anti Award Day", passed a resolution condemning the Communal Award. Mr. Hirendra Nath Datta presided.

An action was taken against the Faquir of Ipi's headquarter near Kharre, about two miles from the Durand line. Due warning was first given to the tribesmen to disperse.

The Left Consolidation Committee in Calcutta passed a resolution calling upon its constituent units, as well as the people of India to observe a "National Struggle Week" from August 31, to September 6, 1939.

- 18th. The Kashmir State Government granted a general amnesty for all undertrial prisoners and those convicted and sentenced in connection with the Durganag agitation.

Sr. Subhas Chandra Bose, speaking in Calcutta on the political situation said, "If the Left forces within the Congress are consolidated, they can bring about a change in the mentality that is pervading the Congress organization at present."

- 19th. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering, laid the foundation stone of the Mahajati Sadan (the House of the Nation) in Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta.

Sr. Subhas Chandra Bose, in a statement in which he commented on the decision of the Congress President, dissolving the new Executive council of the B. P. C. C., as well as the Election Tribunal appointed by it, made an appeal to Dr. Rajendra Prasad "not to be prejudiced against the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee because of the attitude of the Working Committee towards myself" and "to treat the B. P. C. C. as he would have treated the Gujrat Provincial Congress Committee or the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee."

Bengal Buddhists praised the work of the Ministry at a function in Calcutta organised in honour of the Premier of Bengal and his colleagues in the Cabinet.

Sr. Sarat Chandra Bose, leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, Bengal issued a statement on the controversy with regard to the movement of troops from India. He stated *inter alia*, "In view of the resolution of the Working Committee passed on August 11, I think the public are entitled to further light and elucidation on the points arising out of the Government communique and the Associated Press message." (The official communique was released from Simla on August 17).

The Bihar Government decided to accept the recommendation of the Congress Party in the Legislature regarding the rehabilitation of the co-operative movement in the province, and in pursuance of them, decided to advance a loan of Rs. 10 lakhs to the provincial Co-operative Bank and take all other necessary action in this connection, including the appointment of a board of experts.

20th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru arrived at Dum Dum, on his way to China. Pandit Nehru stated that the object of his visit to China "is not only to convey our good will to the Chinese people but also to meet them and develop contact with them. My visit is of course personal and non-official, although I have the good wishes of the leading people here and the leaders of the Congress."

The Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee at Poona, passed a resolution demanding an explanation from those Congressmen who participated in the demonstration of July 9 against the ministries, before taking disciplinary action against them. The resolution while regretting that the Working Committee should have been compelled to take disciplinary action against an ex-President of the Congress, approved of the action taken against B. J. Subhas Chandra Bose and expressed the opinion that such action was necessary in the interests of discipline in the Congress.

At a meeting of Moslem women in Bombay, an appeal was made to Moslem women to join the League and to advance its programme. The meeting was organized by the Provincial Moslem League Women's Sub-committee. Begum Hafizuddin presided.

Mr. S. Satyamurti, in his presidential address to the Conference of the Himalayan States' Peoples at Simla, advocated the administrative amalgamation of the smaller Indian States into a Sub-Federation as a first step to their entry into the All-India Federation.

The alleged defiance by the *Om Mandali* people of the Government ban, led to further measures against them by the Sind Government. It was understood that the Government ordered the confiscation of all the fund under the control of Dada Lakhraj and the seizure of the premises in his occupation.

21st. The members of the Standing Committee of Princes held a meeting at Simla, with His Excellency the Viceroy in the chair and discussed questions relating to the Federal scheme. The points discussed in conference with officers of the Political Department were:—(1) Treaty Rights, (2) Defence, (3) Internal Autonomy.

The Government of Bengal promulgated an ordinance called the Bengal Raw Jute Futures Ordinance 1939, fixing the minimum rate for contracts relating to raw jute futures at Rs. 36/- per bale.

22nd. The Government of India issued a communique from Simla: "At the request of His Highness the Chancellor, the Crown Representative on August 21 and 22 received the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes who laid before him their desire for a further clarification of certain details of the Federal offer and for a further liberalization of that offer in certain respects,"..... "The points of obscurity mentioned by Their Highnesses were cleared up and an agreement was reached on certain alterations of details not involving any modification of the substance of the offer."

Matters of interest to the Moslem community were discussed at a meeting of the Bengal Provincial Moslem League held in Calcutta, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq presiding.

23rd. The Princes had their final talk with His Excellency the Viceroy regarding the Federal Plan, at Simla.

Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement to the Press re : Subhas Babu resolution of the Working Committee, said, "I owe it to the public to make my position clear. I must confess that the Subhas Babu resolution was drafted by me. I can say that the members of the Working Committee would have shirked the duty of taking action if they could have. They knew that there would be a storm of opposition against their action. It was easier for them to have a colourless resolution than to have one which was no respecter of persons. Not to take some action would have amounted to abdication of their primary function of preserving discipline among Congressmen."

The Bombay Legislative Assembly resumed the discussion of various amendments to the Tenancy Bill. The definition in regard to "rent" was debated at great length on the amendments moved by Sardar N. G. Vinchoorkar and Mr. S. H. Jhabvala.

The Bombay Congress Executive decided to take disciplinary action against eight Congressmen who participated in the demonstrations against the A. I. C. C. decisions.

24th. The grave turn in international affairs was the subject of an informal consultation among the U. F. Ministers and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at

Lucknow. Maulana Azad sent a telegram to the Congress President at Wardha suggesting an emergency meeting of the Working Committee to consider the situation.

The Government of India insisted that there was no radical change in the situation in Waziristan despite the revival of gangster outrages and the necessity to employ troops.

About 40 Ministers of Central Indian States had a discussion at New Delhi, with His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of the Princes.

At the Congress Premiers' Conference at Poona, the international situation was the main subject of discussion; the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and Russia and other international developments were considered by the Conference.

25th. The British Community in Calcutta, at a meeting reaffirmed their loyalty to the Empire in the international crisis.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Hug, Premier of Bengal, made a fervent appeal to the people of Bengal to stand by the Empire in the grave crisis with which it was faced.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, made an impressive reaffirmation of his declaration on the Punjab's readiness to stand shoulder to shoulder with Great Britain in the event of war.

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee adopted a resolution deploring the decision of the Congress Working Committee disqualifying Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose from being President of B. P. O. C. and from being a member of any elective Congress body for three years, and reaffirming full confidence of the Bengal Congress in Sj. Bose.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in a statement from Ranchi, referred to Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose's statement in which he characterized the decision of the Congress Working Committee regarding the executive of the B. P. O. C. as *exparte*. Dr. Prasad contradicted the statement of Sj. Bose.

At the Congress Premiers' Conference, the policy regarding labour legislation and the protection of the handloom industry were among the subjects discussed.

26th. His Excellency the Viceroy issued an ordinance, published in a Gazettee of India Extraordinary, imposing drastic restrictions on foreigners in India.

The Parsi Community in Calcutta celebrated the centenary of the first Fire Temple established by Mr. Rustomji Cowasjee, a philanthropist of Calcutta and Bombay. In the evening, the community's loyalty to the British Crown was expressed in no uncertain terms, and the proceedings closed with the singing of the British National Anthem.

Western India and the Southern Punjab were experiencing the greatest famine of the century.

27th. Several Indian rulers, including His Exalted Highness the Nizam, His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, His Highness the Nawab of Rampur and His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala placed their services at the disposal of the King Emperor in the event of war. The offers were made through His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, who in a communique issued in Simla, expressed thanks to their Highnesses on behalf of the King Emperor.

Under the auspices of the Congress Nationalist Party, Bengal, the Anti-communal Award conference was held in Calcutta.—A resolution condemning the Communal Award as embodied in the Government of India Act, and the Congress attitude of neutrality towards it was passed.

The Council of the Moslem League met in New Delhi. The discussion centred round the point, what should be the Moslem attitude in the event of war. It was resolved, "The Council considers it premature at present to determine the attitude of Moslems in the event of a world war breaking out. The Council meanwhile directs the Foreign Committee to get into touch with Islamic countries and to ascertain their views and if any sudden contingency arises the Working Committee of the All-India Moslem League shall have the power to decide this issue."

The Shias of Lucknow decided to suspend the Tabarra agitation, as a result of talks with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Prime Minister of Madras, addressing the South Indian residents of Poona, declared, "The Congress alone has the capacity and

strength to launch a great vital reform like Harijan temple entry. If the Congress did not launch it, no other party can or will."

- 28th. The All-India Moslem League, in New Delhi, passed over a dozen resolutions, the most important of which concerned the Princes' attitude towards Federation; Baluchistan; Indians in South Africa; and the Communal problem.

Sardar Bahadur Ujjal Singh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Khalsa National Party, observed at Lahore, "It is a matter for regret that some communities and organizations in India are trying to take advantage of the difficulties of Great Britain at this hour. In this matter, I believe the true voice of the Moslems of India as also of all Punjabis is that of the Punjab Premier and not of the Moslem League."

- 29th. His Excellency the Viceroy received further expressions of loyalty and readiness to place their services and resources at His Majesty's disposal from the Rulers of Travancore, Jodhpur, Kolhapur, Bhawalpur, Sitamau and Lunawada.

Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement to the Press, on the international situation, commenting on a request made to him to give a lead to the world in the matter of ensuring peace, said, "My word can have no effect." He further pointed out, "I cannot emphasize my belief more forcibly than by saying that I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence even if such a thing were a possibility. My faith in the wise saying that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword is imperishable."

- 30th. H. E. the Viceroy issued Ordinance No. 5, calling upon European male British subjects between the ages of 16 and 50 to register themselves within 14 days of the issue of the ordinance.

The autumn session of the Central Assembly opened at Simla, with Sir Abdur Rahim, the President, in the chair.

An extraordinary issue of the Gazette of India stated that Ordinance No. 3 was issued providing for the requisition of vessels for the service of His Majesty.

The Bengal Provincial Congress passed a resolution expressing confidence in S. Subhas Chandra Bose.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in the course of a Press statement at Ranchi, referring to the incidents which occurred at a Patna meeting at which demonstrations were staged against S. Subhas Chandra Bose, said, "Political ideas and conviction can not be maintained by suppressing the other side in a democratic organization like the Congress."

- 31st. The Central Assembly discussed the Bill to give the right of divorce to women.

Sir Mohammed Yakub in the course of a statement at Simla, observed, "The proceedings of the Council of the All-India Moslem League held in Delhi, revealed a very unfortunate state of affairs." He also said that it should be the duty of Indians to stand by Britain in the event of any crisis.

The Madras Corporation by 21 votes to 17, decided not to present an address to S. Subhas Chandra Bose.

H. E. the Governor-General sanctioned the constitution of a War Supply Board.

At Lucknow, an informal conference of Ministers, at which the police authorities were present, considered the question arising out of the influence of Khaksars.

The Working Committee of the Bihar Congress Committee took disciplinary action against 6 Congressmen.

## SEPTEMBER—1939

**Chief Events :—**Britain's declaration of war on Germany—The Viceroy's broadcast to the Indian people—Spontaneous offer of men and money by the Indian Princes—Lord Zetland's statement on India in the Lords.

- 1st. Pledges of loyalty and offers of services to the King in the international crisis continued to be reported from various States and cities in India.

The total number of foreigners registered in India up to August 1931, was 9,241; of these Germans numbered 1,580, Italians 740, Poles 68, Rumanians

24, Russians 173, Spanish 184, Hungarians 104, Yugoslavs 84, Bulgarians 2, Americans 1, 903, French 684, and Japanese 891.

The Government of India (Amendment) Bill passed all stages in the House of Commons. The House of Lords passed the third reading of the Government of India (Amendment) Act.

The Government of India decided to cancel all amateur or experimental wireless transmitting sets.

2nd. His Excellency the Viceroy invited Mahatma Gandhi to meet him in Simla in view of the emergency created by the international situation. Mahatma Gandhi left Wardha for Simla.

The Members of the Moslem League Party in the Central Assembly at Simla, resolved that having regard to the resolution of the Council of the All-India Moslem League, passed on August 27, at Delhi giving power to the Working Committee to take such action as they thought proper in the event of war breaking out, the president be requested to convene a meeting of the Working Committee.

The Government of India issued a communique, re: registration of European Subjects. "All European Subjects to whom the Ordinance is applicable, are required to register, whether they have registered themselves with European Associations or not. It is again notified that individuals belonging to the army in India, Reserve officers, or the Auxiliary Force, India, are not required to register."

3rd. Britain and France declared War on Germany.

His Majesty the King broadcast a stirring message to his people, "both at home and overseas", of faith in the cause of Empire and its allies and confidence in the final victory of right and freedom over oppression.

His Excellency the Viceroy in a broadcast speech from Simla, said, "I am confident that India will make her contribution on the side of human freedom as against the rule of force, and will play a part worthy of her place among the great nations and the historic civilizations of the world."

An extraordinary issue of the Gazette of India published two proclamations by His Excellency the Viceroy declaring "that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by war", and "that war has broken out between His Majesty's Government and Germany."

Prominent leaders and officials of Bengal made an appeal to the public to come forward and offer their services for the protection of Calcutta in case it was attacked by an enemy from the air.

A Press Note from the Bureau of Public Information of the Government of India and the Collectors of Customs at Bombay and Calcutta, on the subject of trading with enemy firms, said, "Trading with enemy firms or enemy subjects in British India has become an offence punishable with imprisonment or fine."

His Excellency the Viceroy promulgated Ordinance No. 5 providing for special measures to ensure the public safety and interest and the defence of British India and for the trial of certain offences.

The Defence of India Ordinance empowered the Central Government to make such rules as appeared to be necessary or expedient for securing the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order or the efficient prosecution of war or for maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community.

Orders were issued by the Government of India, imposing restriction in civil aviation in the interests of public safety.

The Enemy Foreigners' order was published in the Gazette of India.—The order provided for the establishment of internment camps at such places, thought fit by the Central Government and the appointment of a Commandant over every such camp.

4th. A special Admiralty order proclaiming mobilization of Royal Naval and Royal Marine pensioners, the Royal Fleet Reserve and the Royal Naval Reserve was posted in Calcutta.

About 100 German nationals were arrested by police in Calcutta.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Chatfield Commission, rapid progress was made in bringing the equipment and organisation of India's defences into line with modern conditions, both internationally and technically.

A Ministry of Information Communique announced that His Majesty's Government accepted with deep appreciation the offer of the Government of

Nepal to send 8000 Nepalese troops for service with His Majesty's forces in India.

In the Central Legislative Assembly at Simla, Sir M. Zafrulla Khan, the leader of the House observed : "We can look forward with confidence to the result, of this I am certain that everyone of us here fully realizes the gravity of the crisis which has overtaken the world and is determined to do his duty to our King and country faithfully and with steadfast courage and resolution."

Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Mr. Mahadev Desai arrived in Simla to meet His Excellency the Viceroy.

- 5th. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief broadcasting from Simla, said, "I wish to remind you, that all connected with India's defence are addressing themselves to their utmost in the present grave emergency to meet all the dangers which India may be faced with. In the performance of this task we shall be immensely encouraged by the support, sympathy and understanding of people of good-will and intelligence who realise the danger which threaten India in the circumstances of today and have some understanding of which the defence forces must do to meet them."

Mahatma Gandhi in a statement on his meeting with the Viceroy, said, that he told His Excellency that his own sympathies were with Britain and France from the purely humanitarian point of view. "It almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force."

A communique issued by the Government of Bengal stated that with the object of coercing the Government to meet their demands, hunger-strike was being increasingly adopted by certain classes of prisoners. The communique stated, "After mature and careful consideration the Government have decided to be guided by the following principles in dealing with hunger-strikes and they take this opportunity of making their decision widely known. When prisoners are on hunger-strike the Government will take all possible steps to preserve their lives, and if necessary will also have recourse to artificial feeding for this purpose. Further, if circumstances so require they will take all such steps as they consider proper to prevent publication in the Press of any matter relating to hunger-strikers and also to prevent all demonstration or agitation in that connexion."

Under the auspices of the British Indian Association, a largely attended public meeting was held in Calcutta to pledge loyalty to the Crown. The meeting was representative of all sections of the Indian community and was presided over by Sir Prodyot Kumar Tagore.

The Moslem League Party in the Central Assembly staged a walk-out as a protest against what they regarded as the "unaccommodating attitude" of the Government spokesmen.

- 6th. The action taken by the Government of Bengal to prevent profiteering, specially in this matter of supply of foodstuffs, and other necessities of life was warmly welcomed by the public.

Messages of loyalty and offers of services in the war to the Crown continued to pour in from Princes, Indian leaders and various communities in the country.

Eight Congressmen of Maharashtra were warned by the Provincial President for participating in the demonstration against the A. I. C. C. decisions.

- 7th. The Government of India in a reassuring statement on man power observed, that they were receiving hourly offers of services from members of all communities, that schemes for the allocation of national service to members of the larger communities were under consideration, but that the time for dealing with offers of service already made had not yet come.

Gifts of over Rs. 13 lakhs were received from the Indian Princes, towards the cost of prosecuting the war.

The Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act was promulgated by the order of His Highness the Maharaja at Srinagar.—The Act consisted of six parts and 78 sections.—Subject to His Highness' inherent legislative, executive and judicial powers in relation to the State Government, a Council of Ministers, consisting of a Prime Minister and such other Ministers as His Highness might appoint, was invested with powers of superintending, directing and controlling of civil administration of State. Provision was made for the appointment of an Advocate-General.—The Legislature of the State was to consist of His Highness and the Praja Sabha. The Sabha comprising of 75 members.



Sir Wasir Hassan, a former Chief Judge of the Oudh Chief Court in a statement from Lucknow, declared, "The Indian National Congress can have no intention of striking a bargain with England at this critical juncture. Our claim for freedom has not arisen from this crisis. It is an old claim. It is our birth-right."

Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister for Commerce, Labour and Rural Reconstruction, Government of Bengal, met at a conference at the Bengal Secretariat, representatives of the various chambers of commerce, trades and manufactures, to consider how best to stop profiteering and what principles should be followed and what steps should be taken in regulating prices of specified commodities and how hoarding could be prevented.

8th. In the Central Assembly, the Government accepted an amendment for reference of the Defence of India Bill to a Select Committee.

A Gazette of India Extra-ordinary notified the grant of power to provincial Governments including Chief Commissioners to control prices of articles, subject to certain conditions. Power should only be exercised in respect of necessities, such as medical supplies, foodstuffs, salt, kerosene oil and the cheaper qualities of cotton cloth.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in an interview at Rangoon, said, "We have repeatedly stated that we are not out to bargain. We do not approach the problem with a view to taking advantage of Britain's difficulties."

A statement signed by Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sir P. C. Roy, Sir Manmathanath Mukherjee and several other Hindu leaders of Bengal was issued in Calcutta calling upon India to stand by Britain and "resist the disastrous policy of domination by force. No Indian would desire that England should lose the battle for freedom she is fighting to-day."

M. Paderewski, the celebrated Polish pianist and former politician, appealed to Mahatma Gandhi, in a cable from Morges (Switzerland) to use his influence with the people of India to gain for Poland India's sympathy and friendship.

Swami Abhedananda, founder and president of the Ram Krishna Vedanta Society, and the only living direct disciple of Sri Ram Krishna Paramhansa, died in Calcutta.

His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal issued an appeal to Moslems in India to sink their differences and help Britain "in the vindication of those great and noble principles of liberty, fair play and justice for which Islam stands."

9th. More messages of loyalty from the Princes of India were received by His Excellency the Viceroy bringing the total to 83. To all His Excellency replied with warm thanks on behalf of the King Emperor.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, on his return flight from China, arrived in Calcutta. Referring to the War, Pandit Nehru said he thought he could not add anything to what he had already stated to an interviewer at Rangoon. "You will appreciate", he continued, "that it is not proper for me, or for any one else, to go about giving his private advice on a matter of such grave import. There should be unity of thought, followed by unity of action. In order to have unity of action, there must be a certain unity of thought and full consultation and co-operation. At this stage it is right and proper that nationalist India should speak with one voice and act in a united way."

The Congress Working Committee held a six-hour meeting at Wardha. Mahatma Gandhi was present throughout the sitting.—Sri. Subhas Chandra Bose, Mr. M. S. Aney, Acharya Narendra Dev and Mr. Jai Prakash Narain were also present by invitation.—At the conclusion of the meeting it was announced that Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Aney gave the committee an account of the recent interviews they had with the Viceroy at Simla and a general discussion took place later.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harizon*, under the caption, "That unbecoming demonstration" (at Patna): "Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose has a perfect right to agitate against the action of the Working Committee and canvas public opinion against it. The hostile demonstration of an unseemly nature, which brought no credit to the Congress, showed an unworthy intolerance."

To put a stop to profiteering, various provincial authorities were taking steps to check abnormal increases in the prices of commodities.

10th. The Congress Working Committee adjourned without reaching at any conclusion on the question of the Congress attitude to war.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the National Liberal Federation of India was held in Bombay.—Sir Chimanlal Setalvad presided. It was resolved *inter alia*, "The Working Committee appeals to other political parties to take a broad view of the situation so that the country is left in no doubt as to its duty in the present crisis which is definitely to range itself on the side of Britain."

Mr. K. M. Munshi, Home Minister, Bombay, presiding over the annual meeting of the Gujrati Sahitya Samsad in Bombay, made a reference to the war in Europe. He said that it had been brought about by Hitler's racial arrogance, and that it was a war of ruthless destruction carried on against civilized nations.

A sum of Rs. 1,05,000 in Indian Currency, alleged to be the Nazi Party's Fund for activities in India, was found by the special Branch of the C. I. D. during the course of a search in Bombay.

- 11th. His Excellency the Viceroy addressing a joint session of the two Houses of the Central Legislature, said, "I am confident that however difficult may be the days that lie ahead of us, India will speak and act as one, and that her contribution will be worthy of her ancient name." The most impressive part of the proceedings was the reading by the Viceroy of a gracious message to India from the King Emperor. "I am confident", His Majesty said, "that in the struggle in which I and my people have now entered we can count on sympathy and support from every quarter of the Indian continent in face of the common danger." His Excellency also announced that preparations in connection with the introduction of Federation would remain in suspense during the pendency of the war.

The Congress Working Committee met again at Wardha, without coming to any decision on the question of its attitude to the war.

His Highness the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, made a stirring appeal to all his subjects to stand united, firm and bold and to give unstinted support to the British Government in a righteous cause.

The Government of Bengal, stated an official communique, decided to fix and regulate the prices of the principal items of foodstuffs, medicines, medical supplies, salt, kerosene oil and cheaper varieties of cloth.

By a Gazette Extraordinary the Punjab Government gave powers to all Deputy Commissioners in their respective districts to control prices of foodstuffs, medical supplies, cheaper qualities of cotton cloth etc.

- 12th. The Council of State at Simla, unanimously passed a motion expressing "profound admiration of Poland's heroic struggle against wanton aggression and complete confidence that the undaunted spirit of their people and the unflinching determination of their allies will ultimately lead them to victory." Sir Jagadiah Prasad, Leader of the House delivered a striking speech on India's duty in the war.

In the U. P. Legislative Council, a concession which the Ministry had agreed to make outside the terms of the compromise embodied in the report of the Select Committee on the Tenancy Bill was introduced when the Council resumed discussion of that Bill.

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha—on the war issue the draft resolution before the Committee would appear to follow the line of thought revealed in Mahatma Gandhi's statement at Simla.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, in a speech at a meeting in Amritsar, declared, "I agree with those who say that India should not interest herself in Imperialist wars. But to-day you have to fight not for the sake of England but in defence of your own hearths and homes, in defence of justice and right, and stand in line with the Moslem countries of the world."

- 13th. The Maharaja of Morvi offered to contribute Rs. 5 lakhs towards the expenses of the war. The offer was gratefully accepted by the Crown Representative.

The Congress Working Committee at Wardha, passed a resolution setting aside the co-optation of twenty-five members to the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee.

- 14th. In the Central Assembly, the results of the Select Committee's seven hours' work on the Defence of India Bill were discussed: Sir Zafarullah Khan, Leader of the House, moved consideration of the Bill, which he claimed had been materially improved in the Committee stage.

Under the joint auspices of the Anglo-Indian Civil Liberties Association and the Anglo-Indian Rate-payers Association in Calcutta, a meeting was held in Calcutta under the presidency of the Mayor. A resolution urging the Anglo-Indian and Indian citizens of Calcutta to co-operate whole-heartedly with the authorities in the defence of Calcutta and India was passed.

The Congress Working Committee, after a long meeting, issued a statement deferring its decision on the Congress attitude towards the War, so as to allow time for further elucidation of the issues at stake. The Committee in its statement, supported Poland in its fight against aggression and maintained that it had no quarrel with Germany or German people, but with aggression. The Committee wanted from Britain a clarification of her objective in the war, and invited the British Government to declare in unambiguous terms how it intended to apply the principle of Democracy to India. The statement added that a decision could not be long delayed.

- 15th. The Government warned the landlords of New Delhi against increases in house rent : the property owners having attempted to increase rents by as much as 100 p. c. in expectation of the heavy demands on accommodation.

On the Indo-Afghan frontier, a conspiracy believed to have been inspired by foreign influences and designed to create serious diversions on the frontier, simultaneously with the out-break of war in Europe was brought to light. It revealed that a group of malcontents formed a Jirgah but were repulsed when attempting to enter Afghanistan.

The Parsi Community of Karachi met under the chairmanship of Khan Bahadur Katrak and passed a resolution pledging their loyalty to His Majesty's Government and placing their resources at Government's disposal.

- 16th. Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harijan*, declared, "I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the War."

Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement from Wardha : "The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in seeking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could be done on a purely non-violent basis. All that is required is a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen. The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. For Congress has no soldiers to offer. The Congress fights not with violence but with non-violence."

In the U. P. Legislative Council, an important legislative measure, namely, the Power Alcohol Bill, was introduced, considered and passed. The House also concluded discussion on the third reading of the U. P. Tenancy Bill.

- 17th. His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal addressing a gathering of State officials, jagirdars and prominent non-officials at Bhopal, made an appeal for unity among Moslems and the need for supporting Britain "at this time of a common danger."

Sir S. Radhakrishnan in a statement to the Press on the Congress Working Committee's resolution on war, said, "The statement reflects the hopes and fears of the Indian People."

The Working Committee of the Forward Bloc at Wardha, condemned the India Act amendment which was passed into law.

- 18th. The Working Committee of the All-India Moslem League concluded its session at New Delhi after passing a unanimous resolution dealing mainly with the international situation and Federation. The portion of the resolution dealing with the international situation, said, "If full effective and honourable co-operation of the Moslems is desired by the British Government in the grave crisis which is facing the world to day and if it is desired to bring it to a successful termination, it must create a sense of security and satisfaction among the Moslems and take into confidence the Moslem League which is the only organization that can speak on behalf of Moslem India."

The Government of Central Provinces and Berar reviewing the annual administration reports of the Municipal Committees for the year ending March 1939 referred to the "lamentable lack of civil responsibilities" on the part of the Committees.

The Council of State discussed the Chatfield Report on defence. On Dr. Kanara's adjournment motion on the Report, Mr. C. M. G. Ogilvie claimed that

no major decision affecting India ever had so favourable a reception by all classes of the people as His Majesty's Government's acceptance of the Chatfield Report on the technical and financial problems of modernizing India's defence organization.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad arrived in Lucknow for the Shia-Sunni conference. The Maulana asserted that the Wardha statement on war was the best in the circumstances and that there could be no middle way between co-operation and non-co-operation.

- 19th. The Government of India issued an order under the Defence of India Rules restraining male European British subjects, including members of the Auxiliary Force, India, between the ages of 16 and 50 from leaving the country except with the permission of the officer commanding the district or Independent Brigade area.

Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha, Premier of Bihar, while inaugurating the scheme of compulsory education of the Muzaffarpur Municipality stressed the need of primary education.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, the Congress Nationalist Party's attempts to effect amendment to the Defence of India Bill failed.

Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Commerce Member, introduced a Bill in the Central Assembly to provide for the registration and more effective protection of trade marks.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a meeting at Allahabad, explained the Wardha statement on war. He detailed at length the various items in the Congress resolution on War and the events which had changed the outlook of the Congress. Coming to the Wardha statement itself, Pandit Nehru emphasized that they were to act in a responsible manner so as not to alienate the progressive forces of the world and also to recognize the new status that India had acquired in the eyes of the world. He explained that the Wardha statement did not give a final decision which would depend upon what response England made in this respect.

Mr. Asaf Ali, M. L. A., (Central) in a press interview at New Delhi said, "The Moslem League Working Committee's statement on the international situation is bound to disappoint all thinking Moslems in India. The world crisis demanded a better grasp of fundamentals, wide vision and statesmanship of a high order."

- 20th. In the Central Assembly, the third reading of the Defence of India Bill was passed.—The Congress Nationalist Party made a demand for the right of appeal against all sentences passed by Special Tribunals. Mr. Aney referred to the fact that the Government had in the Select Committee accepted the principle of the right of appeal against sentences of death and transportation.

The Council of State discussed two non-official resolutions one of which, relating to the manufacture of locomotives in India, was adopted in an amended form, while the other, in regard to the demand for the Indianization of the Indian Medical Service, was rejected by 6 votes to 22.

A Press communique from Simla pointed out that the exact application of Ordinance II of 1933, which prescribed the registration of European British subjects as defined therein, was not entirely clear to certain sections of the public: domicile whether in India or elsewhere was not conclusive in determining whether a person was liable to registration.

- 21st. The Government of India placed at the disposal of the industrial branch of the Co-operative Department, Punjab, a sum of Rs. 23,000 to be spent in five years for the improvement of cottage industries.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in the course of an article in the *National Herald*, Lucknow, appealed to Britain to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the crisis and rid herself of her imperialist tradition.

The U. P. Government issued a Press Note contradicting suggestions in certain quarters that the Government launched a campaign to crush the Khaksar movement.

- 22nd. A meeting of the Anglo-Indian Community was held in Calcutta, under the auspices of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association: a resolution was passed unanimously affirming the loyalty of Anglo-Indians to His Majesty the King Emperor, the British Empire and India, and their readiness to answer the call to service whenever it should come.

In the Council of State, official Bills, passed by the Assembly, were passed without amendment. Three of these were amending Bills to the Indian Carriage

by Air Act, Indian Rubber Control Act, Indian Railways Act. The fourth was the Bill to amend certain amendments and to repeal certain other enactments.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, inaugurating the Lucknow Students' Conference, reprimanded students for practising the unreality of shouting slogans. Pandit Nehru observed that those who were thinking in terms of the Forward Bloc, were in his opinion doing dis-service to the country.

- 23rd. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan*, that the satisfactory termination of the Jampur Satyagraha was a triumph of non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi in another article in the *Harijan*, entitled "Temple Entry" dealing with the alleged persecution of reformers following the throwing open of temples in South India, said, "From everywhere evidence continues to pour in that the Sanatanist opposition is confined to a few, and they do not hesitate to resort to any method however unscrupulous."

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose issued a statement from Bombay, "My attention has been drawn to the remarks made by Pandit Jawharlal Nehru about the Forward Bloc at a recent meeting at Lucknow. Though the Forward Bloc is a dynamic body and has been forging ahead during the last few months, it has unfortunately failed to enlist Pandit Nehru's sympathy. I do not know what his conception of good and evil is, nor do I know why he has been pleased to call the Forward Bloc an evil."

The Lucknow Students' Conference passed a resolution reiterating their confidence in Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose and declaring that the disciplinary action against Sj. Bose and other Leftists was a serious blow to the unity of national forces.

The Secretary of the Congress Committee in one of the districts of the Punjab, wrote to His Excellency the Governor announcing that he along with all other members of the Committee resigned and that the Congress Committee ceased to exist in that district. The Secretary and the other members urged that the Congress should give unconditional support to Britain in the War.

- 24th. His Excellency the Viceroy invited Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah to Simla for further discussion of the situation.

A conference was held at Cuttack, to discuss the programme of a geological survey to be undertaken in Orissa, Mr. Nityananda Kanungo, Minister for Revenue and Development presiding. The conference was attended by Dr. Dunn, Superintending Geologist, who visited Cuttack for the purpose and also by officers of the Revenue and the Development Department.

A conference of Nationalist Muslims held in Lahore, adopted a resolution condemning the Muslim League's attitude towards war. Maulana K. Hanif Nadvi presided.

- 25th. It was officially announced from Wardha that the next session of the All-India Congress would be held at Ramgarh. Acting on Mahatma Gandhi's advice, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and several Congress workers from Bihar, with whom he had been holding consultations, finally decided the matter.

The Council of State began general discussion of the Defence of India Bill, as passed by the Central Legislative Assembly.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, speaking at a Lucknow function, urged the creation of a national militia for the defence of the country.

- 26th. Mahatma Gandhi reached Simla to have a second consultation with His Excellency the Viceroy, since the outbreak of war.

In the Council of State, the first reading of the Defence of India Bill was passed.

Lord Zetland (Secretary of State for India) asked by Lord Snell to make a statement, voiced in the House of Lords the British Government's appreciation of the support of all classes of people in India in the struggle against aggression. Lord Zetland said that he readily accepted Lord Snell's invitation in that "it provides me with an opportunity for giving expression to the high appreciation of His Majesty's Government of the support which has been accorded to them by all classes in India. From the Princes have come the most generous offers of men, money and personal service. From individuals in all parts of the country there have poured in messages of sympathy and support.....I am bound to add, however, that in the course of a statement recently issued, those who have been authorized to speak for the Indian National Congress have indicated that they would find it difficult to co-operate with Great Britain in

the prosecution of the War except upon conditions affecting the political relations between the two countries. These conditions have so far been expressed in abstract terms, and, I am not at present prepared to comment upon them.

- 27th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Chairman of the War Sub-Committee of the Congress, were invited by His Excellency the Viceroy to meet him on October 3.

The Council of State passed the Defence of India Bill.

At a meeting of Lucknow Moslems, Maulana Abul Waft presiding, speeches were delivered condemning the Khaksar agitation in Lucknow.

The U. P. Government, on receiving the reports about the use of violence by Khaksar against police constables near Ghaziabad, instructed the Deputy Inspector General of Police to proceed to Ghaziabad to reinforce police arrangements and meet the Khaksar menace effectively by the use of force or otherwise as District authorities considered necessary.

- 28th. The appeal filed by S. Subhas Chandra Bose against the judgment of Mr. Justice B. J. Wadia in the Vithalbhai Patel will dispute, was dismissed by the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Kania at the Bombay High Court.

The absence of hostile activity in Waziristan indicated that the Faqir of Ipi was living somewhere in seclusion, having dispensed with all his followers except three or four personal attendants.

The Customs authorities issued orders regarding the release of German goods to importers subject to certain conditions notwithstanding that the goods were not paid for in part or in full prior to the declaration of war.

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, in an interview at Simla, suggested that Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the Moslem League, should meet not as politicians but as statesmen to discuss the problem of India's position in the War.

- 29th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in a statement referring to the statement made by Lord Zetland, the India Secretary, in the House of Lords said, "The Congress Working Committee had explained the position of the Congress at length and with clarity and dignity. Lord Zetland has not followed the Working Committee's example in this respect. We had tried to consider the problem of India in the larger context of war aims and had requested the British Government to declare clearly what their aims in this war were and, further, give effect to such aims, in so far as it was possible at the present."

Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement on the same subject, said "I maintain that the Congress is an all inclusive body. Without offence to any body it can be said of it that it is the one body that has represented for over half a century, without a rival, the vast masses of India, irrespective of class or creed. It has not a single interest opposed to that of the Mussalmans or that of the people of the States. And the Congress has every right to know that it can go to the people and tell them that at the end of the war India's status as an independent country is as much assured as that of Great Britain."

His Excellency the Viceroy opened a War Purposes Fund to receive the spontaneous and very generous donations for purposes connected with the war which have been sent to him by all sections of the community and from all parts of India.

The Bengal Provincial Congress Election Tribunal, appointed by the Congress Working Committee and consisting of Mr. Satish Chandra Das Gupta, Prof. Khitish Prasad Chattopadhyaya and Prof. Priya Ranjan Sen met in Calcutta.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the Moslem League, speaking at the annual dinner of the Old Boys' Association of the Osmania University at Hyderabad (Deccan) said: "I have always believed in a Hindu Moslem pact. But such a pact can only be an honourable one and not a pact which will mean destruction of one and the survival of the other."

- 30th. Mahatma Gandhi, writing in the *Harijan*, said, "Strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the allies. Willy-nilly this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler."

Mr. N. R. Sarker, Finance Minister, Government of Bengal, speaking at a conference of the Merchants' Association of Faridpur, made a strong plea for united and co-ordinated action on the part of business men.

The U. P. Government's efforts to find a solution of the labour dispute

in Cawnpore and avert a general strike in the cotton and woollen mills were fruitless.

Mr. S. Satyamurti, Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly, speaking at Madras on "India and the War", said, "I do hope the present stalemate will soon be dissolved and the result of talks between our leaders and the Viceroy will lead to a clarification of the claims of India, enabling her to play to the fullest her part in the War."

"Laxminarayan Day" held under the auspices of the Nagpur University, was celebrated at Jabulpore. The late Rao Bahadur D. Laxminarayan had donated Rs. 30,00,000 to the Nagpur University for technical and industrial development in the province, that sum having increased to Rs. 55,00,000.

## OCTOBER—1939

**Chief Events :—**The Congress resolution on War—The Viceroy's Statement on India's Political Future—Congress Ministries in the Provinces called upon to resign :—Several Ministries resigned.

1st. The Public Health Commissioner in his annual report for 1937, stated that "Fevens" alone accounted for over 3,000,000 deaths or 55 per cent of the total mortality and respiratory diseases for 8%.

Mr. R. A. Kidwai, the acting Premier of U. P. in a statement observed, "It appears that in certain quarters a suspicion is entertained that the Government is determined to crush the Khaksars. There is no such intention."

The Moslems at Sukkur, contrary to the decisions of the Council of Action to postpone direct action, launched Satyagraha with a view to securing possession of Manzalgah.

The Upper House in Bihar, inspite of the Government's opposition, passed Mr. G. Lal's Bill to amend the Bakast Land Restoration Act. The Bill laid down that there should be a right of appeal to both parties from orders passed by the collector or a person authorized by him.

2nd. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, and Pandit Jawharlal Nehru arrived at Delhi for their interview with His Excellency the Viceroy.—Final talks between Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders before the Viceroy's interview with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Nehru, chairman of the Congress war sub-committee took place at New Delhi.

The Government of Bombay issued a Press Note which dispelled the notion that foreign degrees in non-technical subjects conferred advantages in the matter of Government appointments.

The Government of Bihar's rural development scheme started with its formal inauguration by the Ministers, parliamentary secretaries and other prominent leaders of Bihar, in the different districts.

A statement from Bombay, issued by Sir Chimanlal Sitalvad, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar (Liberals), Mr. V. D. Savarkar (Hindu Mahasabha), Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, expressed the view that the Congress and the Moslem League do not represent the whole or even the bulk of India and that any constitutional or administrative arrangement arrived at between the Government and the Congress and the Moslem League could not be binding on the Indian people.

In accordance with the decision of the General Council of the Mazdoor Sabha to bring about a general strike in the textile mills of Cawnpore in sympathy with the strikers of the Victoria Mills, about 12,000 workers went on strike.

3rd. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, Premier of Madras, declared in an interview, "Prohibition is based on the firm foundation of popular desire and has a meaning and a future far beyond the boundaries of mere temperance laws."

The Government of Bengal, having considered the individual causes of 9 political prisoners and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the same, ordered them to be released.

A Defence Department Press Note announced that vacancies in the Royal Air Force Units in India would be filled for the first time by local recruitment.

Three major points, discussed at the interview between His Excellency the Viceroy and Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, were understood to have been : (I) Britain's war aims and her peace aims. (II) The extent to

which effect may be given as soon as possible to her aims in India. (III) Congress co-operation in India's war organisation.

- 4th. His Excellency the Viceroy, continuing his consultations with political leaders, had a three quarter of an hour talk with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The U. P. Assembly passed the Tenancy Bill, incorporating the amendments made by the U. P. Council.

- 5th. Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Moslem League President, had interviews with His Excellency the Viceroy. Mr. Jinnah informed that he had duly placed the views of the various communities before the Viceroy and he was confident that these would receive careful attention and consideration by His Excellency.

At Meerut, the military were called out to control the ugly situation created by the communal riot which broke out on the 4th. October. Two hundred persons were arrested.

The Bihar Assembly adopted a rule empowering the speaker to suspend any member acting in a disorderly manner from attending the sittings of the Assembly for a period not exceeding the term of the session in which this prerogative might be asserted.

- 6th. S. Subhas Chandra Bose received a telegram inviting him to an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy in New Delhi on October 10.

A large number of kidnapping outrages occurred in the the North-West Frontier Province. Eight persons were kidnapped near Manzal while travelling in a mail lorry.

- 7th. The Working Committee of the Congress assembled at Wardha. Two sittings were held, one in the morning for three hours and the second in the afternoon for 6 hours. Mahatma Gandhi was present at the second meeting. The Committee heard accounts of the interviews which Mahatma Gandhi and members of the war sub-committee had with H. E. the Viceroy and also Pandit Jawharlal Nehru's conversations with Mr. Jinnah.

Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harizan*, headed "The unfortunate people of Travancore", said, "The Princes will render Great Britain a real service when they can offer their services not as so many autocrats but as true representatives of their people." He continued by saying, "In these times every one of the Princes has powers of absolute autocrats. Hitler enjoys no greater powers. Britain's position as the self-constituted guardian of democracy is compromised so long as it has more than 500 autocrats as her allies."

The Government of Sind in a statement on the Manzalgah Satyagraha at Sukkur pointed out that hitherto they refrained from using their lawful powers to put an end to violence but further acts of violence on the part of the Satyagrahis would be met with adequate action.

- 8th. The fourth annual meeting of the Indian Science News Association took place at the University College of Science, Calcutta. Dr. Satya Charan Laha presided.

The Council of the provincial Moslem Leagues at Lucknow, decided not to support the Khaksar movement.—Mr. Jinnah decided to mediate in the dispute with the Government.

- 9th. A resolution seeking the All-India Congress Committee's approval of the Working Committee's statement issued from Wardha on September 14 on the war situation and repeating the invitation to the British Government to state their war and peace aims, was passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha. The resolution was placed before the All-India Congress Committee, which also met at Wardha.

The second week of His Excellency the Viceroy's talks with Indian leaders since his return to New Delhi from Simla began by granting interviews to Nawab Mahomed Ismail Khan, President of the United Provinces Moslem League, Mr. V. D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Mr. F. N. Saprú, President of the National Liberal Federation received an invitation from His Excellency the Viceroy.

The All-India Congress Committee adjourned after about 22 amendments had been moved to the Working Committee's "War crisis" resolution. Most of the movers of the amendments belonged to the Leftist group and the burden of their amendments was to ask the Congress to stand by past declarations regarding War.



10th. His Excellency the Viceroy granted interviews to Mr. A. Aikman, Leader of the European group in the Central Assembly, Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose, Leader of the Forward Bloc and Sardar Aurangzeb Khan from Peshawar.

The Congress Working Committee's resolution on war was passed by the All-India Congress Committee by 188 votes to 58. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru severely criticized the talk of a break-away by a section of the organization which might threaten independent action if the Working Committee did not achieve in negotiation with the British Government substantially what the Leftists wanted.

The Government of Bengal made an appeal to Labour not to resort to strike recklessly in the time of emergency. It was pointed out that the Minister for Labour was always ready to hear the complaints of workers and would do all in his power to bring about an amicable settlement.

11th. His Excellency the Viceroy granted interviews to Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal, the Maharajahdiraja of Burdwan and Mr. A. R. Elliot Lockhart of the European Association.

Mahatma Gandhi was present at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the States Peoples' Conference at Wardha. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya were also present. The question of appointing a States Sub-Committee in order to bring about greater contact and co-ordination between the States Peoples' Conference Standing Committee and the Congress Working Committee was discussed.

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, addressing a batch of 70 panchayat officers at Lahore, said that the province was proud of its sacrifices in the last war, when 62 percent of the men in the Indian Army were Punjabis.

At the conference which the members of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha had with the Premiers of the Congress governed provinces, problems arising out of the war, particularly the working of the different Ordinances, were discussed.

Mr. D. K. Sanyal, Secretary, Appointments Board, Calcutta University, in his second year's report on the Working of the Board for the year ended May 31, 1939, observed: "A tendency is observable that University trained young men are shaking off their prejudices against hard and hazardous work."

12th. The All-India Congress Committee's resolution passed at Wardha demanding a clear statement of Britain's war aims found support in numerous comments all throughout India.—Mr. F. E. James, M. L. A. (Central) addressing a meeting of the European Association at Coonoor said that the need for a clear statement of Britain's war aims had been emphasized not only in India but also in Britain itself. There was nothing wrong in the request, and there was no reason why it should not be granted.....In Bombay, the *Times of India* said, "The position of Congress Governments is fast becoming difficult, and we trust that something will be done to avert their resignation, which as Lord Zetland says, would be a calamity.....The *Madras Mail* said that the Congress demand for the immediate application of the principle of independence to India argued a unity which was demonstrably lacking. This apart, the resolution might be regarded as little more than a request for a restatement of known objectivism.

The offer of services in the War, made by Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, on behalf of the Punjab to the British Government, was confirmed at a representative conference at Lahore of Punjab Zamindars. The conference was presided over by Khan Bahadur Nawab Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana, and was attended by almost all the Ministers, including the Premier.

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Punjab Premier, in a Press interview at Lahore, said that communal unity was vital in India and urged further talks between the Congress and the Moslem League.

13th. Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement on the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee on war, appealed to Europeans in India "to range themselves alongside the Congress" and advised Congressmen "to desist from any action that would savour of indiscipline or defiance." He described the A. I. C. C. resolution as moderate and wise.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Moslem League, released to Press the correspondence which passed between him and the Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in regard to the allegations against the Congress Provincial Governments.

The Hon'ble Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, the Premier of Madras, had an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy.

- 14th. Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harijan*, headed "on Trial," said, "It is better for India to discard violence altogether—even in the defence of her borders." He continued: "In the course of conversations with members of the Working Committee, I discovered that their non-violence had never gone beyond fighting the British Government with that weapon."

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, in the course of a Press statement, put forward a plea for the enlistment of Bengali youths in the army.

A clash occurred between a party of Police and about 60 Khaksars who arrived in Lucknow by train.

The Government declared a blockade against the Afridis of Khyber Agency. It applied both to Afridis seeking entry into British territory and to persons from British territory seeking entry into Afridi country.

Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Minister for Local Self-Government, U. P. presided over the opening session of the Agra Province Women's Conference held in Cawnpore.

- 15th. The fifth Marketing Officers Conference which was opened by Kunwar Sir Jagadish Prasad on October 10, at New Delhi, concluded its session. The most important subject under discussion related to the measures to be taken during the War to keep in touch with current prices, visible stocks, available supplies of essential commodities etc.

Pandit Ambika Prasad Bajpai, presiding over the 28th annual session of the All-India Hindi conference at Benares, declared, "The only language which can be the national language of India is Hindi."

Presiding at the eleventh session of the Gauhati Prabasi Bengali Chatra Sammilani, Professor Humayun Kabir dealt on the different phases of Bengali literature and its influence on the national character of Bengal.

- 16th. H. E. the Viceroy granted interviews to Kumarraja Muthia Chettiar, Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, Major Sir Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Rai Bahadur Barakha Singh and Master Tara Singh.—His Excellency's consultations with representative leaders of Indian political life drew to a close.

Mr. Srikrishna Sinha, the Bihar Premier, when he moved a resolution relating to the war, framed on the lines of the recent All-India Congress Committee resolution in the Bihar Assembly, declared, "India is only waiting for a gesture from Great Britain and millions would then rush to give their lives in the battle-field to help her in the present War."

Sir Mirza Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, addressing the Representative Assembly, observed, "Let me suggest to our misguided patriots that constitutional reform—if that is what they are aiming at—is best effected by reason and not by rowdiness."

- 17th. His Excellency the Viceroy's appeal for unity:—Two important announcements with regard to the political future of India and the country's attitude towards the war were made by His Excellency the Viceroy in a statement issued from New Delhi.—His Excellency stated that he was authorized by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the War they would be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India, and with the Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such constitutional modifications as might seem desirable.—His Excellency announced the immediate establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war questions relating to war activities.

The Government of Bengal completed their examination of all the cases of terrorist and civil disobedience prisoners which were placed before the Advisory Committee. Prisoners numbering 149 were released unconditionally, 45 were released or offered their release on conditions, 7 were granted remission and in 40 cases clemency was refused. The Press communique stated that the figures compared very favourably with the Advisory Committee which were that 148 prisoners should be released unconditionally, and 33 conditionally, that remission should be granted in 15 cases and that clemency should be refused in 45 cases.

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal promulgated an Ordinance called the

Bengal Jute Regulation Ordinance, 1939, to regulate the cultivation of jute in the province and to enable the Government to prepare a record of the lands on which jute was being grown in 1939.

- 18th. Mahatma Gandhi characterized H. E. the Viceroy's declaration on India's political future, as "profoundly disappointing."—The Mahatma in a statement said : "It would have been better if the British Government had declined to make any declaration whatsoever. The long statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of divide and rule is to continue. So far as I can see the Congress will be no party to it. "The Indian declaration shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it. Another Round Table is promised at the end of the war. Like its predecessor it is bound to fail. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone."

Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, concluded an address in the House of Lords in which he dealt with India's attitude to the war, the varying demands of her leaders for political freedom and the difficulties which confronted the British Government in meeting those demands, by saying, "This then is my appeal to the peoples of India—that in comradeship with us, while presenting a united front to the forces ranged against us they strive after that agreement among themselves without which they will surely fail to achieve that unity which is an essential of nationhood."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru issued a joint statement :—"We have read the Viceroy's statement with deep regret. The whole statement is a complete repudiation of all that India stands for nationally and internationally. It is the statement which would have been out of date twenty years ago ; to-day it has absolutely no relation to reality. There is no mention in it of independence, freedom, democracy or self-determination." Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, the Madras Premier, described the statement as "deeply disappointing." Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Depressed classes spokesman supported the Viceroy. The latter in a Press interview at Bombay stated, "What else could the Viceroy have done in the circumstances of the case."

Sir Jawala Prasad Srivastava, a former U. P. Minister, in a statement hoped that the declaration by the Viceroy would give complete satisfaction to all sections of Indians.

Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel, Vice-President of the European Association, referred to the Viceroy's declarations. He said *inter alia* : "Fortunately, while His Excellency has been able on the one hand with the authority of His Majesty's Government to give an assurance regarding modification of the details of the Act of 1935 in the light of Indian opinion at the end of the war, on the other hand he has given binding assurances to the minority communities that their interests will be fully consulted."

- 19th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, in the course of a statement on the Viceroy's declaration, said : "There is no room now left for any one to doubt that British policy remains as it always has been."

A meeting of Depressed Classes citizens in Delhi Province with Rao Bahadur M. O. Raja, passed a resolution offering unconditional co-operation to the British Government and wishing success to British arms.

In the course of an interview at Nagpur, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu commenting on the Viceroy's statement said, "Our internal disunity may undoubtedly be sometimes successfully exploited as a text to preach a plausible sermon against the freedom of India, but in this supreme hour of international crisis it would have been an act of wisdom not to expose so clearly and cruelly the fundamental disparity between Indian ideas and British Policies."

- 20th. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Liberal leader commented on the Viceroy's statement saying, "The Viceroy's declaration is bound to cause much disappointment among those in the country who have already made up their minds as to the future constitution of India and the precise method of achieving it." But he pointed out that no useful purpose would be served by refusing to face realities.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in a Press interview at Wardha, said, "The Viceroy's statement leaves no room for further discussion. The Ministries cannot last. The circumstances and conditions relating to various provinces differ and these will have to be taken into consideration by us in this connexion."

- 21st. In an interview at Wardha, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said, "There is no need for

calling a special session of the Congress as there is nothing to discuss. In the Working Committee too we have nothing to discuss. We have only to decide. The Dusserah is an auspicious day for taking decisions and the Working Committee will take them."

The Committee of the National Liberal Federation of India met at Bombay to consider the Viceroy's statement. Mr. P. N. Saprú presided.

Discussion between the Government of the United Provinces and the President of the Moslem League at New Delhi, on the position created in the province by the influx of Khakhsars advanced a further stage as a result of the meeting between Dr. K. N. Katju, Minister of Justice and Mr. M. A. Jinnah. The proposals which were submitted to Mr. Jinnah by Khaksars were handed over to Dr. Katju, who would place those proposals before the Government.

- 22nd. The Congress Working Committee at Wardha passed a resolution calling upon the Congress Ministries in the provinces to resign and appealing to the nation to sink all internal differences in "this hour of grave crisis."

The Working Committee of the Moslem League, which met in New Delhi, passed a resolution expressing satisfaction with H. E. the Viceroy's statement but asking for the further clarification of certain points and authorizing Mr. Jinnah to take steps to this end. The League noted with satisfaction the British Government's recognition that the League alone could speak for Moslems in India and also the Government's recognition of the rights and interests of other minorities.

The Council of the All-India National Liberal Federation meeting in Bombay, characterized the Viceroy's declaration as unsatisfactory and declared that internal differences should not be permitted to bar the way to a 'Free constitution.' The Federation, while confirming its pledge of support for the democracies in the war, appealed to the various parties to sink their differences and "help in the emergence of a new India with real power to further the cause of genuine democracy and peace."

- 23rd. Mahatma Gandhi stated in an interview at Wardhaganj: "How I wish the studied moderation of the Working Committee's resolution will be recognised and appreciated by all concerned. Deplorable as the Viceregal declaration undoubtedly is, there is nothing irretrievable. The moderation of the Working Committee's resolution leaves the door open for satisfying the national demand and averting the crisis."

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal, in a statement strongly criticized the Congress decision to resign and emphatically dissociated himself and other members of his cabinet from the views against the Viceroy's declaration expressed by Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Finance Minister, Bengal.

The Independent Labour Party in India decided to support Britain in the War. The Executive Council of the Party was of opinion that "the present is not the proper occasion for withholding its co-operation from Great Britain: Dr. Ambedkar, leader of the party, issued a statement expressing the views that "a better and a more satisfactory response with regard to the aspirations and demands of the people of India would have come from His Majesty's Government if the Congress had tried to bring about unity between the different communities and sections in this country."

- 24th. His Highness the Yuvaraja of Mysore, speaking on the occasion of the Dusserah festival at Dorchester, said, "In contrast to certain races which I need not mention by name, the British Commonwealth of Nations does represent the greatest area of permanent goodwill that the world has ever seen."

His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner speaking at a Durbar said that the Princes were ready to risk their lives and to stake their all in support of Britain.

Sir Mirza Ismail, in his address to the Representative Assembly at Mysore made a reference to the constitutional reforms proposals. The Dewan said that the report, which was received by the Government on August 31 last, was receiving the earnest consideration of the Government and they expected to pass orders before long. He had every hope that the recommendations of the Committee and the Government order thereon would be received with satisfaction by the country."

In the Punjab Assembly, a resolution approving the policy of the Punjab Government in offering co-operation to the British Government in the prosecution of the war was tabled by three members of the Unionist Party.

In the Punjab Assembly, Mr. Maqbool Mahmood, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, informed Choudhuri Kartar Singh that 2,108 persons were arrested in connexion with the Kisan Morcha at Lahore and other places; of these 1042 had been released in pursuance of the statement made by the Government.

25th. The *Daily Herald* published a special message from Mahatma Gandhi. It stated, "The Congress has left the door open to Britain to amend her mistake."

Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar delivering the Convocation Address of the University of Mysore, said, 'The fashionable slogan now-a-days is 'down with Imperialism' but none of those, who from their sojourn in the giddy heights of cloud-land refuse to tread on terra firma, can fail to realize that as we are situated it is a matter for thankfulness that we are part of a powerful Empire."

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru met some journalists at a conference in Bombay and explained the Congress view point regarding the minorities with particular reference to the Moslem.

Mr. N. R. Sarker, Finance Minister, Bengal, in a Press statement, said : "It has been my misfortune to differ from my leader and colleague Mr. Fazlul Huq on several occasions in the past, and his latest statement criticizing my views on the recent announcement of the Viceroy is another which I cannot in justice to myself let go unnoticed."

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari had a long interview with His Excellency the Governor of Madras, when the Premier informed His Excellency of the discussions of Congress Working Committee at Wardha, leading to their direction to Congress Ministries to resign.

In the Bombay Assembly, Mr. B. G. Kher moved the Congress Party's resolution on war. Mr. Kher's resolution stated *inter alia* : "This Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and have further, in complete disregard of Indian opinion, passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of provincial Governments."

26th. Sir Samuel Hoare, replying to the debate on India in the House of Commons initiated by Mr. Wedgwood Benn, declared : "There are now two kinds of Dominion Status, as some people seem to think. The Dominion Status that we contemplated was the Dominion Status which has been described by Mr. Wedgwood Benn—Dominion Status of 1926. That Dominion Status is not a prize that is given to a deserving community but is the recognition of the facts that actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India, and in my views the sooner they exist the better, the aim of our policy will be achieved. If there are difficulties in the way, they are not of our making. They are inherent in the many divisions between classes and communities in the great sub-continent. It must be the aim of Indians themselves to remove these divisions just as it should be our aim to help Indians in their task."

The Madras Legislative Assembly passed by 153 votes to 22, the Premier's resolution on the War.—The Moslem League party staged a walk-out as the amendment tabled by the leader of the group was disallowed by the Speaker.

In the Bombay Legislative Assembly, the Congress party's resolution on War was discussed by the House. Commending his resolution to the House, Mr. B. G. Kher traced the events leading up to the critical situation and recalled the Congress demand for a declaration of policy.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai addressed a public meeting at Bombay and explained the Working Committee's resolution on the war situation. Pandit Nehru said that the British Government's declarations showed that they believed that by sitting in the Ministerial benches, the Congress had forgotten its aspirations. The Congress demanded that constitution based on the will of the people should be framed.

27th. Sir Samuel Hoare's statement created a definitely favourable impression in unofficial quarters in New Delhi, for it was considered that the reference to the possibility of expanding the Viceroy's Council would be well received both by Congressmen and the Moslem League.

Mahatma Gandhi in a statement, appreciated the conciliatory tone of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech, but asked for proof that "Britain has shed her imperialistic ambitions even before India is declared independent." Mahatma Gandhi added : "The Congress decision is an imperative call of duty. It puts mostly

the Congress and the British Government on trial. Nothing but good will come out of it, if both will play the game."

The Madras Ministry tendered its resignation, which was not accepted by His Excellency the Governor. It was stated that resignations by Congress Ministers could not be accepted until arrangements were made for carrying on the Governments in the provinces affected.

In a Press interview at Wardha, in connexion with the House of Commons debate on India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, said: "Mahatma Gandhi's statement represents my reaction to Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the Commons debate and it is hardly necessary for me to say much more."

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, in a Press statement, wrote about reference of the Congress-League question to an arbitration tribunal.

The Bombay Legislative Assembly, by 92 votes to 56, passed with a slight change, the Congress party's resolution on war which was introduced by the Premier, Mr. B. G. Kher. The Moslem League party's amendment to the effect that democracy was unsuited to the genius of the country, was rejected by 89 votes to 23.

Mr. G. N. Bardoloi, the Assam Premier, issued a reply to the statement of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Bengal Premier, regarding the treatment of Moslems in Congress provinces.

In the United Provinces Assembly, Pandit G. B. Pant, the Premier, moved the Congress party's resolution concerning Britain's war aims,—the resolution was on the lines of the Bombay resolution. Chaudhuri Kalq-uz-zaman, leader of the Moslem League party, in moving his party's amendment to the Congress resolution, appealed to Congress to reconsider their decision and come to terms with the Moslem League.

The Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha issued a statement on the declaration made by the viceroy, saying: "We fully realize the gravity of the situation and the menace that confronts India. We feel it our duty to call upon the youths of Bengal to rally to the defence of their country and also call upon the Government immediately to create a suitable atmosphere and to devise proper machinery to provide them with military training and all other equipments so as to enable them to do their duty."

Congress leaders exchanged views at Lucknow, with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Moslem League leaders with Chaudhuri Kalq-uz-zaman. The opinion was held in both quarters that Sir Samuel Hoare's statement recorded an advance on the Viceroy's declaration.

Mr. C. P. N. Sinha, the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly appealed to the Congress to reconsider their decision with regard to the giving up of office in the provinces.

28th. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harizan*, that "the control and management of civil disobedience has been left in my hands. The best way of losing a cause is to abuse your opponent and to trade upon his weakness. Whatever may be true of other modes of warfare, in Satyagraha it has been held that causes for failure are to be sought within. The refusal by the British Government to fulfil the Congress hope that they would make the expected declaration, is solely due to the weakness in the Congress organization and Congressmen."

Mahatma Gandhi, in another article in the *Harizan*, in reply to a Moslem correspondent, said: "Live and let live on mutual forbearance and toleration is the law of life."

In the U. P. Assembly, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, General Secretary of the Moslem League, in answer to the repeated charges levelled against him by Congress speakers that the League was betraying the Islamic ideal of democracy, explained that the Moslem League was not opposed to democracy but only to that form of it which was embodied in the Act of 1935.

The Council of Rulers of the Eastern States Agency at a meeting in Calcutta, adopted a resolution expressing steadfast loyalty and unflinching devotion to His Majesty the King Emperor.

29th. His Excellency the Viceroy issued invitations to the leaders of the Congress and of the Moslem League to meet him at New Delhi: the invitations were assumed to be in connexion with consultations envisaged in Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in explaining the implications of the resolution of the Congress Working Committee, in a circular letter to the

Provincial Congress Committees, expressed the view : "Our non-violence to-day is put to the greatest test in respect of Hindu-Moslem relations. Congressmen have to show their non-violence—in particular at the time of Hindu-Moslem riots by losing their lives, if need be, to prevent them. They may not take sides."

Dr. G. S. Arundale, President of the Theosophical Society, addressing a public meeting at Salem, pointed out that the war was fought not only for the preservation of peace and democracy in Europe but that it was a war against injustice, aggression and evil things whenever they might be, and that it was a war for India's freedom. He incidentally remarked, "Mr. Gandhi is not a political leader but a spiritual leader."

His Excellency the Governor of Madras received Kumarraja Muthiah Chettiar, Leader of the Opposition and of the Justice Party in the Madras Assembly, who informed His Excellency that he was unable to accept the invitation to assist in forming a Council of Ministers.

Under the reforms announced in the Rajkot Darbar Gazette Extraordinary, the Rajkot State Assembly would be reconstituted so as to consist of 80 members, excluding the President, of whom 40 would be elected and 20 nominated and of the latter 5 should be official members.

Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Labour Minister, Bengal issued a statement, observing, "The feelings of the Moslems of India towards the war are explicit. This war has aroused in us a deeper regard for the ideals for which the British people and the British Government stand than ever and has evoked spontaneous feeling of loyalty and a desire to take our share in the burden of the War."

30th. His Excellency Lord Erskine accepted the resignation of the Madras Ministry and took over the administration of the Presidency. The Legislature was prorogued.

The United Provinces Ministry also resigned.

In the Assam Legislative Assembly, the Congress resolution on war which was moved by the Premier was carried by 127 votes to 2. An amendment by the Moslem League was defeated by 128 votes to 19.

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in a Press statement accepted Mr. Fazlul Huq's "challenge" and invited his co-operation to investigate his "fantastic" charges against Congress Governments.

As a result of the Congress Working Committee debarring S. Subhas Chandra Bose from holding the office of the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee or any other office of elective Congress bodies, the executive of the Provincial Congress at its meeting in Calcutta, elected Mr. Rajendra Chandra Deb, as President of the B. P. C. C. in place of S. Bose. There was no other candidate.

31st. H. E. the Viceroy's decision to invite Congress and Moslem League leaders to a joint discussion gave deep satisfaction in all quarters.

The Congress Ministries in Bihar and Bombay resigned.

Labour forces were to be trebled in India's ammunition, gun and shell factories. This statement was the first indication officially to be given of the extent of the Government's programme for the development of the country's ordnance factories which ultimately would far exceed their present maximum capacity of production.

S. Subhas Chandra Bose, criticizing some of the statements by Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad said, regarding the weakness in Congress organization and Congress men, "In my humble opinion this failure is largely due to bad leadership, both before the out-break of war and after."

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in an address at Lucknow, said that the differences between the Congress and British Government were fundamental.

## NOVEMBER—1939

**Chief Events :—**Lord Zetland's Statement in the Lords on British intentions towards India—The Viceroy's Broadcast Message to the Indian people—Constitutional Reforms announced in the Mysore State—Congress Working Committee meeting in Allahabad.

1st. Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Moslem League, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Congress, held a joint conference with His Excellency the Viceroy in New Delhi. Mr. Jinnah also attended the conference at the Viceroy's House. A discussion of general character took place after which the meeting adjourned.

Following the resignations by the Congress Ministries in the United Provinces, Bihar and Bombay, the Governors of the above provinces invited the leaders of the Opposition in the respective assemblies for consultation regarding the formation of alternative Ministries. The leaders of the Opposition expressed their inability to form Ministries in those provinces.

In the C. P. Assembly at Nagpur, the first measure to be taken for discussion was the C. P. and Berar Vidya Mandir and the constitution of committees for their management;—the Opposition motion for the recirculation of the Bill was rejected.

2nd. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad arrived at New Delhi, where they met Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Then Mahatma Gandhi had a conversation with Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Hopes of an agreement between Congress and the Moslem League on a joint proposal to be placed before the Viceroy for the settlement of India's immediate political difficulties became brighter following Mahatma Gandhi's decision to prolong his stay at Delhi.

Lord Zetland, in the House of Lords, made a statement of Britain's intentions towards India, replying to a debate on India: "It is sometimes said still in India that we are fighting to maintain Imperialism there, but every step taken since 1919 has emphasized and ratified the determination of the people of this country to work for self-Government in India. Our intentions remain what they have been ever since the Act of 1919. We are striving our best with all sincerity to assist in removing the obstacles which at present lie in the path of the fulfilment of the promises which have been made. But I still find from my practical experience every day of the year for the past 4 or 5 years that it is no use ignoring difficulties in your path. What you may do is to work patiently and in all sincerity to remove them.

3rd. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, informed the Pressmen at New Delhi, that the Congress reply to be made to the Viceroy was ready and was expected to be sent on the 4th November. In reply to a question, he said that the reply was not a joint one by the Congress and the Moslem League. An indication of the trend of the Congress reply was taken to be contained in a statement by Dr. Rajendra Prasad in which he invited the British Government to "throw on Indians the responsibility of producing an agreed constitution without any interference from outside and to promise to give statutory effect to it when produced."

H. E. the Governor of Bihar accepted the resignation tendered by his Council of Ministers and assumed control of all legislative and administrative powers within the Province.

H. E. the Governor of the United Provinces accepted the resignation tendered by the Ministers, and issued a proclamation suspending the constitution. His Excellency in a broadcast talk appealed for public co-operation in the successful prosecution of the War.

In the Punjab Assembly, the Unionist Party's resolution on the war offering unconditional support to Britain and the amendments moved by the various parties were discussed. The main resolution was moved by Sardar Bahadur Gurbachan Singh (Unionist) and Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Leader of the Opposition (Congress) moved an amendment.

In the Orissa Legislative Assembly, Mr. Biswanath Das, the Premier, moved the Congress War resolution. Speaking on the resolution, Mr. Das said that India did not want to worry England in her difficult days. "Indian leaders declared sympathy and support to the allied cause". All that she wanted was the application of Britain's war aims to India.

H. E. the Governor of the Central Provinces asked the Ministry that with regard to their impending resignation, due notice should be given to enable His Excellency to make alternate arrangements to carry on the administration.

A meeting of Hindus held under the presidency of Dr. B. S. Moonje at Nagpur, resolved to inform His Excellency the Viceroy that Mahatma Gandhi being of the Congress does not represent Hindus, and to warn the Government



that any communal settlement arrived at behind the back of the Hindu Mahasabha as a result of conversations now in progress in Delhi would not be acceptable and binding on Hindus.

- 4th. Replies to suggestions for a settlements of some of the major problems of India's political future were submitted to the Viceroy by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on behalf of the Congress, and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, on behalf of the Moslem League.

Mahatma Gandhi had an interview with H. E. the Viceroy in the morning while Mr. M. A. Jinnah met His Excellency later in the day. Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad left New Delhi.

On the Hindu Moslem question, Mahatma Gandhi said, "No pact seems to be in front of us. Janab Jinnah Sahab looks to British power to safeguard Moslem rights. Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him."

The Orissa Ministry resigned. The House adopted the resolution by 36 votes to 16.

The Governor of Bombay accepted the resignation of the Ministry and issued a proclamation suspending the constitution.

Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harijan*, entitled "The next step", remarked, "I have never felt the weight of responsibility as heavily as I do to-day in connexion with the present impasse with the British Government. The resignation of the Congress Ministries was a necessity, but the next step is by no means clear. Congressmen seem to be expecting a big move. Some correspondents tell me that if I only give the call, there will be an all-India response such as has never been made before and they assure me that people will remain non-violent. Beyond their assurance I have no other proof in support of their statement. I have proof in my possession to the contrary."

Mahatma Gandhi, in an interview to the Indian correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* on the Lords debate on India said that he was shocked at Lord Zetland's suggestion that the Congress was a Hindu organization and was amazed that it could emanate from one in the responsible position of Secretary of State.

From Hyderabad (Deccan), a communique said: "The Air Council has decided to allocate His Exalted Highness' gift of £100,000 towards the cost of a new fighter squadron to be formed shortly and to be known as "The Hyderabad Squadron."

A report detailing action taken by the Central and Provincial Governments during 1937-38 on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour stated, that continued attention was being paid by the Provincial Governments to the health and welfare of the industrial worker.

- 5th. H. E. the Viceroy in a broadcast message to the Indian people and in an official statement issued from New Delhi, stated, "I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again in consultation with the leaders of these great political parties and the Princes to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity."

The correspondence which passed between His Excellency, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad while the negotiations in Delhi were in progress, were published along with His Excellency's statement. That from Dr. Rajendra Prasad to His Excellency emphasized the Congress Party's insistence on the granting of its demands and regretted that the communal question had been dragged into the Delhi negotiations. Mr. Jinnah's letter to the Viceroy revealed the unwillingness of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to enter into negotiations with the Moslem Leader for a communal settlement in the provincial field until the British Government had complied with Congress demands.

The Government of Mysore, passing orders on the report of the constitutional Reforms Committee which concluded its labours, announced the reforms to be introduced in the State. "The State Executive Council will be enlarged and it will hereafter consist of the Dewan and four Ministers. The Dewan will be appointed by the Maharaja. Of the four Ministers, all of whom will be nominated by the Maharaja, at least two will be drawn from among the elected members of the Representative Assembly and the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council will have an elected majority, of its 68 members 44 will be elected and 24 nominated. The franchise for the Representative Assembly (Lower House) will be extended so that the electorate will be about double its present size."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing Congress volunteers at Ahmedabad said that the Congress did not intend to harass the British Government at the present moment. The sympathies of Indian leaders were with Britain and France, and they believed that the spread of Nazism would lead to the destruction of civilization.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah issued a statement from New Delhi, "I assure Mr. Gandhi that the Mussalmans of India depend upon their own inherent strength. We are determined to fight and fight to the last ditch for rights to which we are entitled in spite of the British or the Congress. We do not depend on any body."

- 6th. Mahatma Gandhi passing through Nagpur on his way to Wardha, in reply to numerous questions, said, "I will resist civil disobedience unless I find the country prepared for that."

Pandit Jawharlal Nehru, in the course of a statement issued to the Press from Lucknow, said the Viceroy's statement surprised him as it conveyed an entirely different impression of what transpired in Delhi and from what he had gathered from contact with some of the principal parties concerned.

His Excellency the Governor of Orissa accepted the resignation of the Ministry and appointed Mr. L. C. Ansorge, I.C.S., as adviser to assist him in the administration of the province.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in a statement issued at Patna declared: "We have made our views perfectly clear. We will not accept the position as stated by Sir Samuel Hoare. The question of the constitutional status of India and the declaration of British war aims are the primary issues with us. All other issues are of secondary importance, which cannot be allowed to overshadow the major issues, for less supersede them."

The outflow of Khaksars from the city of Lucknow was more rapid than the influx into the city sometime back.

- 7th. Lord Zetland, speaking in the House of Lords during a debate on India, expressed the belief that there was still every chance of an early settlement of the constitutional crisis in India. He regretted the Congress Ministries' decision to resign, especially as they had shown such zeal in carrying out their administrative duties but felt that the setback was temporary and would be of short duration.

The Ministers of the Frontier Provinces signed a joint resignation, which the Premier handed to His Excellency the Governor.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, issued a statement from Patna. He stated *inter alia*: "He (the Viceroy) seems to give the impression that the British Government is unable to comply with our request for a clear declaration of India's status as a free country on account of our differences. The fact is that the British Government is not prepared to promise that it will accept and give legal effect to any constitution which Indians including all real minorities would prepare and in which safeguards for the protection of the minorities will be included".

Mr. Jinnah addressing a Moslem meeting at Bombay, said "I am always willing to come to a settlement with my Hindu brethren on 'equal terms'. I have no ill-will against them."

- 8th. The Central Provinces Ministry resigned. His Excellency the Governor informed the Prime Minister that he could not finally accept the resignations of the Ministry until he had had time to make other arrangements for carrying on the Government of the Province.

Mahatma Gandhi in a statement issued at Wardha said: "There can be no civil resistance so long as the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, the Moslem League blocks the way, and there is indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks."

The conspiracy believed to have been inspired by foreign influences to create serious diversions on the Indo-Afghan frontier evidently collapsed.

- 9th. The Government of India issued a communique on the controversy over the Haj pilgrim traffic. It stated *inter alia*: "The Government of India were unable to agree to the Scindia Steam Navigation Company's proposals involving an increase in fares to Rs. 215 return from Karachi when the Moghul line were prepared and able to carry all pilgrims at the maximum fares of last season, that is, Rs. 167 return from Karachi. The Moghul line accepted the decision of the Government of India. The Scindia Company were unwilling to do so and have suspended their pilgrim sailings for the season."

H. E. the Governor of C. P. granted interviews to the leaders of Opposition groups in the Provincial Assembly.

Mr. F. E. James, M. L. A., addressing the Bangalore District circle of the European Association referred to the problem of recruitment to the services, the positions created by the resignations of the Congress Ministries, the need for Mahatma Gandhi assuming effective leadership with a view to promoting Hindu Moslem unity, and above all, the necessity for India co-operating in the war effort in her own interests.

The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Darbhanga presided over the Convocation of the Sanskrit Parishad. Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan addressing the Convocation stressed the importance of spiritual advancement and the need for a greater sense of values and appreciation of their correct proportion.

- 10th. The resignations tendered by the Congress Ministries in the Central Provinces and the North West Frontier Provinces were accepted by the Governors of the two provinces.

The annual report of the Indian Trade Commissioner, London for 1938-39, said: "It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that without trade agreements or some form of international control it is becoming exceedingly difficult for any country to maintain its existing volume of trade."

- 11th. Her Majesty the Queen broadcast an Armistice Day Message to the Women of the Empire, thanking them for the way they had answered the call for fortitude and self-sacrifice.

Armistice Day was observed in Calcutta, but owing to the outbreak of war there were no ceremonial parades.

Mahatma Gandhi discussed the question of religion and nationality, writing under the caption "Opinions Differ", in the *Harjan*. He said that if Hindus, Moslems and others are to evolve democracy it could be done only by the whole nation speaking its mind through its representatives elected under the broadest possible franchise. Mahatma Gandhi also expressed the hope that the talks between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru would result in producing a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle.

In another article in the *Harjan*, entitled "Travancore", the Mahatma referred to the deputation which waited on him: "I told them, therefore, that they must judge for themselves, irrespective of my opinion, for I was not prepared to take the risk of curbing even harmless political activity for fear of imaginary consequences. The leaders should therefore consider themselves free from any restraint from me. After the greatest deliberation they took two steps embodied in restrained language."

Travancore's offer of Rs. 6 lakhs as a contribution to the war and its readiness to place its entire army at the disposal of the British Government as well as to raise a labour corps if and when necessary, were deeply appreciated in a speech by the President of the Madras States, Lt. Col. G. P. Murphy at the State banquet held in honour of the Maharaja's 27th birthday.

Mr. A. Gordon, C. I. E., I. S. E., in his presidential address at the tenth annual meeting of the Central Board of Irrigation which met in Delhi, laid stress on benefits from irrigation and the necessity for the maintenance of a highly efficient irrigation service.

- 12th. Sir Ahmad Said Khan, Nawab of Ohhatari, in the course of a statement issued from New Delhi, expressed the opinion, "that the communal question is the main question to be solved if we are really desirous to see a free and prosperous India."

- 13th. The Government of India decided to give financial assistance to men who were prepared to train as pilots and engineers and to give an undertaking to serve in the air forces if and when called upon to do so.

Mr. Jinnah, President, All-India Moslem League unfurling the Moslem flag at the Esplanade Maidan, Bombay, declared; "Active support to the Moslem League must be the only political creed of Moslems."

A Press Note issued from New Delhi, explained the object for the founding of H. E. the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund; donations offered and paid into this fund exceeded Rs. 80,00,000.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, referring to Mahatma Gandhi's article in the *Harjan* on Travancore, said: "There are some persons who too often look at Travancore through coloured spectacles. One of them is Mahatma Gandhi."

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Ex-Premier, Madras, speaking at a function arranged in honour of Mr. S. Satyamurti, the Mayor of Madras said : "India could have entered a new epoch in her history and reached a position of honour in the world if Hindus and Moslems could even provisionally come together and presented a united front to the Viceroy. The majority community should now strive further to secure the esteem and love of Moslems."

In a resolution of the Government of Bengal on the release of political prisoners it was stated : "When the present Ministry assumed office there were undergoing sentences of imprisonment 457 persons who had been convicted by Courts in Bengal of specific crimes committed in this province in furtherance of the terrorist movement ; of these there are now in custody only 87."

- 14th. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava (Congress), Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, gave an assurance to the Premier Sir Sikander Hyat Khan that the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly was always ready for a reasonable and honourable settlement of the communal question.

Mr. N. R. Sarkar gave an illuminating address on the present position of Bengal in the industrial development of the Province with particular reference to the cotton mill industry, inaugurating the first of a series of industrial survey lectures organised by the Calcutta Corporation Commercial Museum.

The Committee of Ministers of the Eastern States Agency concluded a two-days' meeting in Calcutta.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, the ex-Premier, addressing a meeting at Madras, referred to what he described as the need for safeguarding Britain's "concrete interests in India" and said : "It is for the British to state what these interests are and what is the minimum protection they claim for them. It should be reduced to the minimum and stated in pounds sterling and provided for by agreement or arbitration by disinterested judges, say some Dominion Minister or Ministers. This could easily be made a preliminary to the Constitution. I am told we can find precedent for this in the history of Irish affairs."

- 16th. Sir M. Saadulla, Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly agreed to form an alternative Government following the resignation of the Congress Coalition Government,—a communique was issued to that effect by the Secretary to H. E. the Governor of Assam.

- 17th. It was announced in an Assam Gazette Extraordinary that H. E. the Governor of Assam accepted the resignation of the Congress Coalition Ministry and agreed to the formation of a new Council of Ministers, with Sir Mohammed Saadulla, Leader of the Opposition party as the Premier.

- 18th. H. E. Sir John Arthur Herbert, the new Governor of Bengal and Lady Herbert arrived in Calcutta. Sir John assumed office after the necessary ceremonials were observed.—Sir John Woodhead, the retiring Governor left Calcutta.

Mahatma Gandhi writing under the caption "Is Congress a Hindu organization ?" in the *Harijan*, said : "There cannot be a grosser libel on the Congress than this. From its inception it has been national. Its originator was an Englishman. The late A. O. Hume was long its Secretary. It has always had one or two Moslem Secretaries. It has had Moslem, English, Christian and Parsi presidents. Dadabhai Naoraji was, till he became invalid, the soul of the Congress. His was the guiding hand and directing brain in every thing. Sir Pherozshah Mehta was the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency. Badruddin Tyabji was for years a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress."

In a statement cabled to the *News Chronicle*, London, Mahatma Gandhi stated, "Does Britain intend to recognize India as an independent nation or must India remain Britain's dependency ? This question has not been raised by the Congress to gain an advantage over Britain, but to enable the people of India to decide how they should behave during the world crisis."

Mr. Aftab Ali, M. L. A., (Bengal) the President of the Indian Seamen's Federation, issued a lengthy statement to the Press, in the course of which he dwelt on the seamen's demands. It was stated *inter alia* : "At the moment, we desire settlement of only two things. Firstly, the question of wage increase and secondly, pending the establishment of the Recruitment Committee, that crews should be selected by "open master", as is done in the case of quartermasters (Sutantries)."

The Council of the Western India National Liberal Association characterised the control exercised by the Congress Executive in the working of the Ministries as detrimental to the healthy growth of parliamentary Government.

19th. Mahatma Gandhi laid the foundation stone of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital at Allahabad.

The three-day session of the Congress Working Committee began at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President envisaged the possibility of the Congress Ministries returning to office at an early date if a more definite declaration of the British Government's war aims in their application to India was forthcoming.

Sr. Sarat Chandra Bose, while presiding over the Dhubri Students' Federation, observed : "Whatever may be the course and character of the war, when it is over the world will not be the same old world and many ideas which pass as current coin today will receive their quietus. So far as we are concerned, the war has already brought about a complete change in the political regime in India. The Congress Ministries have resigned in eight provinces. The constitution has already been suspended in seven of them. The question on every body's lips is what next? The present deadlock in India furnishes an example in which imagination and statesmanship have not been able to overcome the influence of a hidebound tradition. This has exposed a weak spot in the moral case of Great Britain of which Herr Hitler has not been slow to take advantage."

20th. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sen, a well known Bengali scholar and literary man died in Calcutta at the age of 72.

The executive of the Bihar Provincial Moslem League at a meeting at Patna, presided over by Mr. Syed Abdul Aziz, passed a resolution deciding to convene a conference of workers of the provincial League in the last week of December, to discuss and adopt a constructive programme of work and consider means to strengthen the solidarity of the League.

The Congress Working Committee at Allahabad devoted six hours in discussing the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee affairs and when the Committee rose for the day it had not come to any conclusion although it was agreed that a resolution on the subject should be passed. Mahatma Gandhi did not attend the day's sitting.

The Congress President received a written complaint from some members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee alleging that the B. P. Congress Committee, particularly its Executive Council, had defied the resolutions and directions of the Working Committee.

The police opened fire on a riotous mob in Sukkur (Sind) where Hindu-Moslem riots broke out. The death roll was 21 and the number of injured was 23.

21st. The Congress Working Committee at Allahabad discussed the political situation in India following the resignation of the Congress Ministries. At an informal meeting Congress affairs in Bengal and routine matters were discussed. Mahatma Gandhi said that as true Satyagrahis Congressmen should give the other side every chance to bring about a settlement of matters in dispute, at the same time neglecting no opportunity themselves to achieve that desired end.

Two days of communal rioting in Sukkur resulted in a death roll of 29 and 26 injured.

Dr. B. S. Moonje, addressing a public meeting under the auspices of the Hindu Mahasabha, at Patna, observed, "Rejection of the Federal Scheme as embodied in the Government of India Act by the Congress was a blunder in as much as an opportunity for Hindus to control the Central legislature by a large majority had been lost, and the resignation of Ministries was another blunder."

22nd. The Congress Working Committee considered a draft resolution prepared by Mahatma Gandhi on the political situation in India. Mahatma Gandhi explained in detail the implications of his resolution.

H. E. the Governor of Bengal, in exercise of his powers under the Defence of India Rules issued orders regarding steps to be taken in the event of air raids.

Dr. N. N. Law in his presidential address at the second quarterly general meeting of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta said : "The only hope of the future civilization of the world and also of the continued and peaceful existence of small or defenceless states depends entirely on the ultimate victory of the forces of democracy."

23rd. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution on the political situation in India; the resolution declared, "the Working Committee will continue to explore all means of arriving at an honourable settlement even

though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress."

At the annual recruiting meeting of the Bengal Presidency Council of Women in Calcutta, various aspects of social service work which the Council undertook were described by different speakers. An appeal was made to women to join the Council in large numbers to help it to carry on its onerous work.—Lady Sinha presided.

- 24th. In the Bengal Legislative Council non-official resolutions were taken up. Of the 32 resolutions on the agenda, five were disposed of, one being withdrawn after discussion, two falling through and two being carried in an amended form.

Mr. G. L. Mehta, presiding at the third quarterly meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, said that it was a depressing thought that mankind had not even now evolved any method of settling mutual differences other than through War.

- 25th. His Highness the Nawab of Tonk (Rajputana) announced the constitution of a State Assembly for Tonk, and panchayats and certain reforms in Municipal administration.

The aims and ideals of the All-India Women's Conference and the important part it played in moulding public opinion in respect of many subjects which concerned the country's well being, were stressed by Begum Hamid Ali, in her presidential address at the annual conference of the Calcutta constituency of that body in Calcutta.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan*, "The only way out is a Constituent Assembly." Asserting that the Constituent Assembly provided the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem, Mahatma Gandhi explained the implications of the demand and urged that all resources must be exhausted to reach it before direct action was thought of.

Commenting on the Rajkot reforms, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* that not only had the powers hitherto possessed by the people been taken away, but they had been limited as much as possible.

- 26th. The annual conference of the Calcutta constituency of the All-India Women's Conference concluded its deliberations after passing a number of resolutions bearing on educational and social subjects. One of these related to residential hostels for college girls and another to the control and supervision of orphanages, widows' homes, rescue homes, marriage bureaus, and similar institutions. All the resolutions evoked interesting discussions.

- 27th. The winter session of the Bengal Legislative Assembly opened in Calcutta. The only business of importance before the House was consideration of the Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1939, as reported by the Select Committee. The Speaker (Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque) presided.

Prof. A. R. Millikan, who won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1923, addressing a meeting at the Indian Association for the cultivation of science in Calcutta, explained the aims and objects of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

- 28th. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Commerce Member to the Government of India, when he met the Committee of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, made pronouncements on the policy of the Government of industries during the War and the supply of raw materials from abroad.

The Bengal Legislative Council had a brief sitting when business relating to the Moneylenders Bill (as passed by the Lower House) was taken up *denovo*.

H. E. the Governor of the Punjab, replying to an address at Lahore, condemned the revolutionary political doctrines which impaired the value and reliability of prospective recruits for the army and irresponsible agitation which advocated violent destruction of the existing social order.

- 29th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the consideration of the Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill was resumed. Mr. Mukunda Behari Mullick, Minister for Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness, sponsored the Bill.

The thirty-second session of the U. P. Political Conference concluded at Muttra, after passing unanimously resolutions relating to Indian States, the Tenancy Bill and the constructive programme of the Congress. The conference was presided over by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

- 30th. Mr. Aftab Ali, M. L. A., President of the All-India Seamen's Federation, sent a cable to Mr. S. Ali, the London representative of the Federation, inform-

him of the settlement arrived at with the shipowners in Calcutta according to which the seamen in their employ were given an increase of 25 percent and a bonus of 25 percent on pre-war wages.

The Bengal Legislative Assembly referred the Jute Regulation Bill (1939) to a select committee with instructions to submit their report by December 8. An opposition amendment to circulate the measure for eliciting public opinion was defeated by 97 votes to 64. The Bill aimed at securing for the grower a fair and steady price for his produce.

## DECEMBER—1939

**Chief Events :—**Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly—Mr. Jinnah's charge of oppression of Moslems in Congress-governed provinces : Demand for a Royal Commission of Enquiry—Mr. Jinnah's call for a "Day of Deliverance" over the resignation of Congress Ministers—Resignation of Mr. N. R. Sarkar, the Bengal Finance Minister.

1st. Sir Henry Gidney, President, Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association, criticized the Congress attitude to Anglo-Indians and made an appeal to the community to offer its services to the King-Emperor unconditionally, in his address at the annual meeting of the Association in Calcutta.

Dr. Nalini Ranjan Sen Gupta presiding over the third session of the Bengal Medical Conference, which began at Barnipur (24 Parganas) observed, "We may differ, but let us all agree in one thing—aggressive nationalism in the guise of Hitlerism is abroad to the detriment of the world's peace today, and let us not add to the dangers menacing our country by aggressiveness, whether for the community, for the province, or worse still for the individual."

2nd. Mahatma Gandhi, commenting on an Englishman's letter on the political situation of India, in the *Harizan*, declared that absolute protection of the rights of minorities was a greater concern of the Congress than it ever could be of Great Britain.

H. E. the Governor of Bengal, and Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal, jointly issued a statement on the decision to establish a Bengal War Purposes Fund. The statement said: "We have had under consideration the most appropriate manner in which the numerous loyal offers of help received from individuals and associations in Bengal, since the outbreak of War, could best be utilized."

At a meeting held under the auspices of the Bengal Hindu Mahasabha in Calcutta, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee presiding, appeals to Hindus of Bengal to work wholeheartedly for the success of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha Conference in Calcutta and also to support the candidates proposed to be run by the Mahasabha in connexion with the general election to the Calcutta Corporation, were made by various speakers. Mr. N. C. Chatterjee said that the Hindus of Bengal condemned the Communal Award, not because it was anti-national but because it was a "pernicious" measure which separated the communities.

Mahatma Gandhi in an article in the *Harizan* entitled "Baffling situation", made it clear that he was opposed to a civil disobedience movement which had as its sole aim the embarrassment of the British Government. Mahatmaji asserted that there was no immediate prospect of starting such a movement. He said, "It will come, when it becomes clearly inevitable", and he appealed to the people to be non-violent.

3rd. H. H. the Maharaja of Baroda, presiding at the annual session of the Maharastra physical culture conference at Satara, declared, "India expects every man to do his duty in this emergency." His Highness also urged young men to take advantage of the facilities provided for military training.

Normal conditions prevailed in the Sukkur district where many were killed and injured in serious communal rioting in several areas in the previous month.

4th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a meeting held in Motigunj, Agra declared: "Though we are always ready to negotiate and arrive at a settlement with the British Government we can never return to old conditions. We have placed our cards on the table, and no useful purpose can be served by inter-

views, talks and statements unless the Government is prepared to accept the views expressed by the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi."

- 5th. H. E. Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, administered the Oaths of Office and Secrecy to three Ministers, namely, Abdul Matin Choudhury, Khan Bahadur Sayidur Rahaman and Miss Mavis Dunn. On the assumption of office by the three Ministers, a cabinet meeting was held when the portfolios were allocated.

In the Bengal Assembly, two Bills, namely, the Official Trustees (Bengal Amendment) Bill and the Administrator General's (Bengal Amendment) Bill were referred to select committees, while the third—the Bengal General Clauses (Amendment) Bill was passed. There was no discussion on any of the Bills, the motions being simply put to the House and carried.

- 6th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President, All-India Moslem League, issued a statement from Bombay :—"I wish Mussalmans all over India to observe, Friday, the 22nd December, as the day of deliverance and thanks-giving—as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function. I hope that the provincial, district and primary Leagues all over India will hold public meetings and pass resolutions and offer prayers by way of thanks-giving for being delivered from the unjust Congress regime."

The Government of Bengal issued a communique fixing maximum prices of certain foodstuffs and other commodities which might be charged by wholesale and retail dealers.

In the Bengal Assembly, a motion by the Premier, Mr. Fazlul Huq, for referring the Bengal Officials Records Bill, 1939 to a select committee, came up for consideration. The Bill sought to "suppress dissemination in the Press and on the platform of the contents of unpublished records of Government unless after due authorization."

- 7th. H. E. Sir Maurice Hallett assumed the office of Governor of the United Provinces, when the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court administered to him the Oaths of Allegiance and Office at Government House, Lucknow.

Lord Zetland criticised the United Provinces Employments Tax Bill in the House of Lords—the occasion was the moving by the Secretary of State of the second reading of the India and Burma (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill and explained the extent to which the present Bill differed from the previous Bill passed by the House of Lords.

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Finance Minister, presented a supplementary estimate of expenditure, amounting to Rs. 62,19,000. The other item of business was the consideration of the Bengal Tenancy (Third Amendment) Bill introduced by Sir Bejoy Prasad Singh Roy, Revenue Minister.

Sir Stafford Cripps, M.P., interviewed on his arrival at Karachi, said : "It was wise on the part of Mr. Gandhi not to have hurried things and to have kept the door open. There may be some form of compromise to save the face of the British Government and to enable them to come to a settlement on the main issue of the Congress demand. There is a distinct change even on the part of conservatives with regard to India and nobody wants to alienate the sympathies of India".

- 8th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, commenting on Mahatma Gandhi's statement to the *News Chronicle*, declared, "Suddenly Mr. Gandhi, who was always sceptical about the Constituent Assembly, has now become an enthusiastic convert and its champion."

Sixteen Moslem members of the Krishak Proja Party in the Bengal Assembly and the Council, issued a statement criticizing Mr. Jinnah's statement, appealing to Moslems to observe December 22, as the "Day of Deliverance and Thanksgiving."

The Bengal Chamber of Commerce in a letter addressed to the Bengal Legislative Assembly said, that it regarded the Agricultural Produce Markets Bill "as a commendable measure particularly in so far as it aims at the exercise of control of weights, measures, prejudicial market customs and the like."

- 9th. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan*, commenting under the caption, "In God's Good Hands" on an Englishman's letter to him stating that he was puzzled that Mahatma Gandhi was "thinking mainly of what political advantage for the cause of Indian independence can be gained from the War situation." "In the present case if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared that she would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace."



Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement appealing to Mr. Jinnah and Moslems to desist from observing the Day of Deliverance and Thanks-giving in view of communal unity talks and following the resignation of Congress Ministries.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, on being told that his appeal to Moslems to celebrate "A Day of Deliverance and Thanksgiving" was ill-timed in view of Congress-League talks, explained the circumstances which led to the publication of his statement. Mr. Jinnah said: "The Moslem League was truly justified in breathing a sigh of relief on the departure of Ministries inimical to Moslem interests and in praying for popular Ministries fully representing the popular rather than a party will." That was all that he asked the Moslems to do.

Sir Daniel Hamilton, a philanthropist, well known for his work in connexion with the co-operative movement in Bengal, died in Scotland.

H. E. Sir John Herbert, Governor of Bengal, in his reply to addresses of welcome presented to him by the Indian Association, Marwari Association, Bengal Mahajan Sabha and the Mahomedan literary Society at Government House, Calcutta, made reference to certain important political questions affecting Bengal and to some matters concerning the economic progress and welfare of the Province.

- 10th. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman, Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee and Mr C. Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier, Madras, in their statements repudiated the allegations of wrongs done to Moslems in the Congress provinces and characterized the charges as absurd and reckless. Mr. Jinnah's appeal to Moslems to observe December 22 as the "day of deliverance", was the occasion for the above statement.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, in the course of a Press statement, declared, repudiating the charges made by Mr. Jinnah against Congress Ministries: "I have stated before and I repeat again that there was never any occasion for complaint, much less for interference. The Madras Ministry like the Ministries in other provinces never gave room for complaint on the part of minorities. On the contrary there may have been occasion when it may be stated that there was indulgence in favour of minorities."

Sir Stafford Cripps, M. P. in his talk to Press representatives at Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, made a statement that greater interest in Indian affairs was being taken by Parliament. Sir Stafford also stated that the influence of groups in the House of Commons favourable to India's aspirations was growing.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a meeting at Allahabad, referred to his Agra speech in which he had referred to the Indian Civil Service and other Imperial Services. Personally, he said, he had never believed that the services were efficient. And in this respect there was no difference between the English and the Indian members of the services.

Lady Rama Rao presiding over the All-India Women's Conference (Central Punjab branch) held at Lahore declared: "There is to-day from all I have noticed since my return to India a real desire to express nationalism in a blind and unthinking advocacy of return to manners and customs of past times and to eject from our life every thing which savours of Europeanization on the ground that we are denationalizing ourselves. This is an attitude, I am afraid, I do not wholly sympathize with."

- 11th. Reports of disturbances following cases of profiteering were received from Jubbulpore and Nagpur in the Central Provinces.

In the Bengal Council, three non-official resolutions on war were tabled for discussion. One of these standing in the name of Rai Bahadur Surendra Narayan Sinha (Progressive) urged "whole-hearted support to the British Government in the prosecution of war against the German menace." The next resolution tabled by Rai Bahadur Kesab Chandra Banerjee (Progressive) sought to affirm the "unswerving allegiance of the people of Bengal to His Majesty's Throne and Person." The third resolution, tabled by Mr. Lalit Chandra Das (Congress) wanted the British Government to declare India "as an independent state in order to enthuse the people of this country to take part and prosecute the war to a successful end."

- 12th. In the Bengal Council, strong condemnation of Nazism was voiced in the House, when a resolution on war was discussed.

In the Bengal Assembly, amendments were tabled in the House on the

Government's War resolution by Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose (Leader of the Opposition), Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hushemy (Proja Party), Mr. P. Banerjee (Congress) and Mr. Abdul Rahman Siddiqui (Coalition).

Mr. S. C. Majumdar, Chief Engineer, Irrigation, Government of Bengal, in his presidential address at the annual meeting of the Institution of Engineers (India) in Calcutta, dealt with the problems concerning the tidal rivers of Bengal and the measures necessary to solve them.

In the Bengal Assembly, the Bengal Tenancy (Third Amendment) Bill introduced by Sir B. P. Singh Roy, Revenue Minister, had an easy passage. Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, Minister for Agriculture, Public Health and Local Self-Government presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Jute Regulations Bill.

- 13th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, in the course of a statement from Bombay, made a demand for a Royal Commission to investigate charges of oppression of Moslems in Congress-governed provinces. Mr. Jinnah reiterated his charges against the Congress Ministries and traced the history of the League's agitation from its first protest against the compulsory singing of 'Bande Mataram', the question of the Congress flag and the supplanting of Urdu by Hindi. He defended his appeal to observe a day of thanksgiving at the resignation of Congress Ministries. It was, he said, an expression of the very natural relief of the Moslem minorities and a way of forcing "ears that have hitherto been deaf to listen to us." He said, "I would have been inclined to respond to Mr. Gandhi's appeal had he and other Congress leaders practised what he preached about the necessity for a cordial atmosphere in which a communal agreement might be arrived at.

In the Bengal Assembly, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Premier moved the war resolution which evoked an interesting debate. The principal speakers were: the Premier, Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose, (the Leader of the Opposition), and Mr. W. C. Wordsworth.

H. E. the Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert, opened the session of the Indian Historical Records Commission in the Darbhanga Library Hall, Calcutta University.

- 14th. H. E. the Viceroy accompanied by Her Excellency Lady Linlithgow arrived in Calcutta.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a public meeting in Bombay expressed the view that the communal problem in this country was not communal in the accepted sense of the term, but purely political.

The Indian Historical Records Commission in Calcutta, recommended to the Government of India the formation of a committee to arrange the acquisition of the typescript of micro-filmed copies of records relating to India, available in the India office in London, Holland, France and Portugal.

Dr. Sir Shafiat Ahmad Khan delivered a lecture on 'Constituent Assembly' in the Moslem Institute Hall, Calcutta. He said *inter alia*: "The device of a Constituent Assembly which has been deliberately adopted to shelve the communal question, will be utterly futile at this juncture. While this is so, we must remember that this is an ideal at which we ought to aim consistently."

Brevet Col. R. N. Chopra, Director of the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, opening an exhibition of medical, surgical and allied products in Calcutta, observed, "With her vast natural resources and huge potential market, India stood on the threshold of a new era of industrialization in the chemical and other allied fields."

A fund for the relief of the Polish refugees was started in Calcutta. H. E. the Viceroy donated Rs. 50,000.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, commenting on Mr. Jinnah's demand for a Royal Commission, said, "Enough has been said already to show the invalidity of Mr. Jinnah's position. He now seeks a Royal Commission to be appointed by the British Government which will be of a purely judicial personnel, composed of Judges of His Majesty's High Court."

- 15th. H. E. Sir John Herbert, the Governor of Bengal, inaugurated the third session of the Indian History Congress in the Ashutosh Building, Calcutta University. His Excellency said that history was a "continuous growth" and gave an explanation and of the problems which faced the world.

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore performed the opening ceremony of the All-India Food and Nutrition Exhibition in Calcutta.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman of the Parliamentary sub-Committee, in a Press statement from Bombay, declared that Mr. Jinnah had "no case" against the Congress and that his "sole object was to keep up communal feeling at a high tension."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a talk to Press representatives in Bombay, reiterated the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly for solving the Indian problem and opposed Mr. Jinnah's demand for a Royal Commission to investigate the Moslem allegations against the former Congress Ministries.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Bengal Premier, issued a statement reiterating his intention to collect evidence regarding the allegations of oppression of Moslems in the provinces formerly controlled by the Congress Ministries and place them before a Royal Commission proposed by Mr. Jinnah.

The eleventh session of the All-India Industries Conference commenced at Mysore, under the presidency of Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Commerce Member to the Government of India. Sir Mirza M. Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, welcomed the delegates on behalf of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

- 16th. Sir Shaffat Ahmad Khan, speaking at a meeting under the auspices of the Bengalee Ex-Service Association in Calcutta, made an earnest appeal for the immediate establishment of Central and Provincial War Boards for mobilizing Indian resources for the prosecution of the War. Prince Akram Hossain said that he did not believe in the classification of martial and non-martial races.

Mahatma Gandhi, in the course of an article in the *Harijan* entitled, "The Princes" said: "When Britain has shed Imperialism, at least so far as India is concerned, it will be discovered that the two 'arms' of Imperialism—the Princes and the I. C. S.—have been no hindrance to Britain's path towards the right act."

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, in a Press interview, suggested a scheme for solving the communal and constitutional problems in India. After referring to the difficulties of forming a Constituent Assembly and the dangers attendant on a country-wide election campaign in view of the present communal tension, the Punjab Premier suggested that a dozen accredited leaders should meet in conference, the Viceroy helping in the selection of the personnel.

Mr. Jinnah's demand for a Royal Commission was supported by Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, M. L. A., President of the All-India Depressed Classes Association.

- 17th. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President, stated his views on Mr. Jinnah's demand for a Royal Commission. He said: "In a way, I welcome this; the situation had come to a head. And now, either the communal problem will be given up as insoluble, or we will arrive at a solution though not quite satisfactory."

The proposed inquiry into certain allegations made by the Moslem League against Congress Governments, suggested by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Bengal Premier, and accepted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was abandoned.

Mr. Jinnah, in a statement from Bombay, referring to his plan for observance of a "day of deliverance" over the resignation of Congress Ministries, said: "The functions of December 22 are not Moslem functions directed against their Hindu fellowmen as a community but a condemnation, pure and simple, of the regime of the Congress." Mr. Jinnah was supported by six members of the Bengal Cabinet, including the Premier, the President of the Bihar Moslem League and the vice-President of the C. P. and Berar Moslem League.

- 18th. H. E. the Viceroy summed up India's position with regard to the war when he addressed the annual meeting in Calcutta of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India, by saying, "The fate of India in the international sphere turns on the success of the Allied Arms."

The Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and held a five hours' sitting, Mahatma Gandhi being present for the first three hours. The Committee had nothing concrete before it to discuss in view of the fact that there had been no new factor in the political situation since the Allahabad meeting except for Lord Zetland's recent statement in the House of Lords which, however, was not regarded as having taken the position any farther than where it was. Members, therefore, reviewed the situation again, taking note of such new tendencies as have a bearing on the situation.

In the Bengal Assembly, the official war resolution moved by Mr. Fazlul Huq, the Premier, was passed by 142 votes to 82.

The Coalition Party in the Bengal Assembly passed a resolution expressing its want of confidence in Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, the Finance Minister, who remained neutral when voting on the war resolution took place.

The Council of Rulers, Eastern States Agency met in Calcutta, to discuss questions relating to the schemes of a joint police force and a High Court—the Raja Sahab of Seraikella presided.

- 19th. The Congress Working Committee further discussed the political situation at Wardha. The Committee had before it a draft statement prepared by Mahatma Gandhi,—the trend of which was that the Committee, without taking any precipitate action immediately, would make an advance over the Allahabad position by making it clear that if the Congress demand was not conceded in essential, the Congress was fully prepared for the next step in its programme which had started with the resignation of the Congress Ministries.

Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Finance Minister, Bengal, tendered his resignation. Mr. Sarkar made the first public announcement that he had resigned from the Bengal Cabinet, in the Bengal Legislative Council, when all sections of the House combined in paying tributes to the valuable work he had rendered to the province as its Finance Minister.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal, issued a statement to the Press, which contained a denial that he had "backed out" of his offer to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to prove his allegations of Congress oppression against Moslems in the provinces under Congress Ministries.

In the Bengal Assembly, Mr. Nausher Ali, an ex-Minister of Bengal and a member of the Proja Party was censured by the Speaker, Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque, for remarks made by him against the chair, during the discussion on the war resolution.

The 15th session of the All-India Philosophical Congress met in the Address Hall of the Osmania University, Hyderabad. The Right Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari, Chancellor of the Osmania University, delivered the inaugural speech.

- 20th. The Congress Working Committee renewed its adjourned sitting at Wardha. Mahatma Gandhi was present throughout the meeting,—the Committee also discussed the question of observance of the "Independence Day" on January 26, the Bengal Congress affairs, and the riots in Sukkur, Sind.

In the Bengal Council, the question of the improvement of the silk industry of Bengal was raised when replying to a question addressed by Rai Bahadur S. N. Sinha (Liberal) on the condition of the industry, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy said that the silk industry had declined considerably as a result of the economic depression and severe competition by foreign silk.

- 21st. The Congress Working Committee at Wardha did not come to a decision on the main resolution on the political situation. The Committee, however, adopted a resolution on the Bengal Congress affairs and appointed a Committee of eight, (an ad hoc committee) with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Chairman, to make arrangements for conducting elections of delegates to the annual session of the Congress, and other elections. The Members of the ad hoc Committee were : Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Chairman), Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Dr. Buresh Chandra Bannerjee, Mr. J. C. Gupta, Mr. Kiran Shankar Roy, Mr. Anand Prasad Chowdhury, and Mr. Bhojendra Nath Palit.

It was announced at the conclusion of the meeting that it was decided that abstention of the members of the Congress Party from the Central Legislature should be continued except in so far as it might be necessary to retain their seats in the Assembly which required at least a day's attendance.

Mr. J. H. Burder, President of the European Association, in his address to the annual meeting of the Association in Calcutta, said : "The difficulties and dangers which India will have to face require the fullest collaboration between our two nations. If India desired unity, she can rely on the full cooperation of our countrymen in turning it from an ideal into a reality."

- 22nd. The Congress Working Committee concluded its five days' session at Wardha after passing a resolution criticising the statement of the Secretary of State for India and reiterating the faith of the Congress in a Constituent Assembly as the "only way to attain a final settlement of the constitutional question would not be satisfactorily solved so long as different parties were to look to a third party through whom they expected to gain special privileges even though it may be at the expense of the nation." The Committee suggested

ized the British Government's raising the communal question as "reluctance to part with power."

The Moslem "Day of Deliverance" called for by Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Moslem League, was observed throughout India by Moslems.

The report of the committee appointed by the Government of Assam and presided over by Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee to inquire into the Digboi Strike, declared: "The strike was resorted to without any justifying grievance." The report further stated: "The Labour Union had mistaken notions of the respective rights of capital and labour; that it did not conduct affairs in the proper manner, that many of the strikers themselves had no idea of the grievances for which they had struck work and that it is not all clear that the strike resolution represented the views of the majority." The report which gave a detailed account of the events which led up to the strike also made a series of recommendations for the prevention of strikes like the Digboi stoppage in the future.

The Government of Assam in a resolution on the report which it commended for its impartiality and judicial fairness stated that the report revealed: "There was no sufficient cause for the strike either in the working conditions or in the actions of the company and that it must be ascribed to the ambition of a few individuals determined to impose their will by methods which can only meet with severe condemnation."

Dr. N. N. Law, presiding at the third quarterly general meeting of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, dwelt at length on what he described as the basic weakness of India's industrial structure.

23rd. Mahatma Gandhi, in an article in the *Harijan*, headed "Independence", in which he tried to answer some objections raised by a correspondent, wrote: "India can settle down to peace only when she can hold against any combination." He also wrote, "The Congress has not asked for independence. It has asked for a declaration of Britain's War aims; secondly, independence, when it comes, will come because India is ripe for it. Therefore, there can be no consideration to be given to it. It is not a marketable thing. It is a status. This, however, does not mean a 'frog-in-the-well status'. There may or may not be an alliance with Britain. My hope is that there will be. So long as I have a share in the attainment of independence, it will be through non-violent means and, therefore, a result of an honourable treaty or settlement with Britain."

24th. Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, speaking at the Convocation of the Benares Hindu University, said: "It is not the making of the constitution itself which necessarily produces agreement; no agreement of any kind is possible without personal contacts and constitution making it a laborious affair which requires infinite pains and patience if lasting results are to be achieved. India, today, was at the cross-roads of her political future, with the forces for good and evil evenly balanced. The time had come for her to solve the problem, not only of her relations with Great Britain, but also the problem of her own domestic differences."

Sir Mirza Ismail, Dewan of Mysore, opening the All-India Khadi and Swadeshi Exhibition at the Congress House, Madras, observed: "In a country like ours, with its diverse castes and creeds, brotherly feeling and the ballot box seem to go ill together. Undue emphasis is placed on religious and cultural differences and sentiment is allowed to play too large a part, while commonsense is at a discount. The more we can infuse brotherhood into democracy the happier will be our country."

25th. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressing the Nagpur Provincial Congress Workers' Camp at Wardha, declared: "The world is in a vortex and a new order is being evolved in which India has to contribute her share."

Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab, in a Press interview on the political situation in the country, said: "Things do look gloomy but I am an optimist. My impression of the whole situation is that, unfortunately, it is not as it should be. My own view is that if in the immediate future some settlement is not arrived at, especially at this critical juncture, it may be too late."

Mt. Stuart, in a Press statement, said: "The greatest day of my life was when I heard that the Federal scheme was suspended, and a still greater moment will be when it is definitely announced."

26th. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing a meeting of the Bombay Congress Legislative Party, reviewed the political situation in the country and the popular reaction thereto. He also examined the problems confronting the country and urged the need for every member to educate his constituency and make them prepared for the next step which the Congress might take.

The first meeting of the ad hoc committee, appointed by the Congress Working Committee—to be known as the Bengal Congress Election Committee, was held in Calcutta; Maulana Abul Kalam Azad presided.

Sir Stafford Cripps left Calcutta for Rangoon, at the conclusion of his tour of India. During his stay in the country he met many Congress leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and leaders of the Moslems League including Mr. Jinnah and Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq. In Calcutta, Sir Stafford met H. E. the Viceroy and H. E. the Governor of Bengal. He also met the Chief Justice of Bengal (Sir Harold Derbyshire).

27th. Dr. R. P. Paranjpye in his presidential address to the National Liberal Federation at Allahabad made an appeal for all parties in India to come together in a spirit of friendliness and hammer out a solution to India's political problems. Referring to the international situation, Dr. Paranjpye asserted that India's comparative safety for the present and also its liability to danger in future were dependent on the British connexion. He also pointed out that the great danger to democracy in India appears to be the growing spirit of totalitarianism, both in the Congress and the Moslem League.

Mahatma Gandhi, addressing the Nagpur Provincial Congress workers at Wardhaganj, declared: "We should resort to civil disobedience only when we are sufficiently strong, when we begin to look upon it as our *dharma* (duty) and when it is inevitable." He continued, "Khadi has no place in a violent fight, but it is our ammunition in a non-violent struggle and if we fire our guns without Khadi, civil disobedience will fail."

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, President-elect of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha session, arrived in Calcutta. Mr. Savarkar, hoisting the Mahasabha flag at the Wellington Square, Calcutta, explained the symbolic significance of the flag, and said that it was not the emblem of any particular part or province of India, but was the emblem of the Hindu race as a whole. The Mahasabha flag, he continued, was not meant to antagonize the flag of any other community, such as that of Mahomedans, Parsis, or any other section of the Indian people who had also right to have flags of their own. This flag only meant that the Hindus had come to realise that they were a nation by themselves and had the right to live as a nation. Mr. Savarkar said that the flag also indicated peace, the one condition being that it must not be antagonised by other flags.

The 15th session of the All-India Educational Conference commenced in the Baradari Hall, Lucknow. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the conference and Sir S. Radhakrishnan presided. The need for a national scheme for education was stressed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in his address. He said, "To serve and protect human creativeness is the end of all education."

Mr. H. B. Sengupta, Minister for Commerce and Labour, Bengal, presided over the 21st session of the Bengal Ministerial Officers' Conference at Burdwan. He said that he would try his best to see that generally the position of ministerial officers was once more examined leading to the betterment of their pay and prospects.

The Madras Provincial Harijan Conference which met at Chidambaram, under the presidency of Mr. V. I. Muniswami Pillai, passed resolutions deploring the political impasse, urging all persons and parties to strive to end the stalemate and requesting the British Government to agree to the calling of a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise and population basis.

28th. Mr. V. D. Savarkar made a comprehensive survey of the political situation in India in his presidential address at the meeting of All-India Hindu Mahasabha in Calcutta. Mr. Savarkar explained in detail the basic principles of the Hindu movement and reviewed vital problems of the day, such as the future constitution of India, the problem of minorities, the Hindu Moslem question, the position of the Hindu Mahasabha in regard to the Congress and the attitude of the Mahasabha in regard to the war and the economic status of India. (Sir Manmohan Nath Mukherjee, Chairman of the Reception Committee read his address discussing in detail the "plight of Bengali Hindus under the Communal Award." He expressed the hope that the Hindus would yet consolidate and

rally under one Hindu banner and fight for their own cause—"a cause which is essentially righteous and in which they want nothing less than what to them is justly due."

A civil reception was accorded to H. H. the Maharaja of Sir Jhoda Shamhere Jung Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Nepal by the Calcutta Corporation at the Calcutta Town Hall.

At the seventh annual general meeting of the Employers' Federation of India, a resolution pledging the whole-hearted assistance and co-operation of the interests represented by the Federation to His Excellency the Viceroy and through him to the British Government in the tasks which confronted the Empire, was passed at the Royal Exchange, Calcutta.

At the All-India Christian Conference at Nagpur, a resolution offering full and unconditional assistance to the British Government in the prosecution of the war was adopted by 25 votes to 11. The resolution was moved by Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, general secretary of the conference. The conference concluded next day, after passing a resolution stating, "As far as our community is concerned it shall be satisfied if the constitution of India is based on a purely nationalistic ideal."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, addressing a public meeting in Bombay, characterized the Moslem League's demands for arriving at a communal settlement as vague. He repudiated the League's charges and stated that the Congress would never be intimidated by such tactics.

29th. Nawab Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur in his presidential address at the 52nd session of the All-India Moslem Educational Conference which opened in Mohamad Ali Park, Calcutta, declared: "No system of education will command our approval which will neglect to develop in us all these qualities, intellectual and moral, which distinguish us as custodians of the spirit and culture of Islam, and which has a mission of its own to fulfil for the uplift of mankind."

The National Liberal Federation at Allahabad passed a resolution on war, appealing to Indians to give their support to the cause for which the democracies were fighting in Europe. The resolution on Dominion Status urged the amendment of the Government of India Act to provide for the establishment of complete responsible Government in the Province and a Federal basis at the centre within a specified period.

30th. The All-India Hindu Mahasabha concluded its session in Calcutta, after passing a resolution criticizing the Bengal Ministry's attitude to Hindus. Other important resolutions passed by the conference referred to India and the War, the formation of a Hindu "militia", India's future constitution and the fundamental rights of Indian citizens.

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee meeting in Calcutta, adopted a resolution expressing its inability to accept the decision of the Congress Working Committee regarding the appointment of an ad hoc Committee in connexion with the election of delegates.

Mahatma Gandhi, in answer to a question, "Is the Congress generally neutral in regard to which religion a person belongs to?", replied in the *Harizon*: "In a free India every religion should prosper on terms of equality unlike what is happening to-day. Christianity being the nominal religion of the rulers, it receives favours which no other religion enjoys. A Government responsible to the people dare not favour one religion over another. But I should see nothing wrong in Hindus congratulating those who having left their fold, I think that the Christians of free America would rejoice at the return to their ancestral Christianity of Americans of the slums—if there are any in America—temporarily calling themselves Hindus under the influence of a plausible Hindu missionary."

Mahatma Gandhi, in a leading article in the *Harizon*, in which he enjoined on Congressmen to note the preamble to the Working Committee's resolution on the "Independence pledge", said: "If Congressmen had honestly lived up to the constructive programme of 1920, there would be Purna Swaraj to-day."

# India in Home Polity

## Introduction

The last six months of 1939 were as prolific of political controversies and conflicts in India as the first six months were. But the outbreak of war in Europe precipitated by Germany, by Herr Hitler and his Nazi followers in control of the machinery of the government of that country, has overshadowed these in our country as in many other countries. We in India are distant from the field of operations; and though Britain, the British Government, the British Viceroy in India, has made our country a belligerent without so much as the courtesy of consulting Indian opinion, without asking any of the leaders of India's public life of their feelings and opinions with regard to the Nazi aggression on Poland, we in India appeared to be disinterested observers of a war that might change the fate and fortune of innumerable countries, belligerents and neutrals. The accident of our inclusion in the British Empire did not appear to have quickened any sense of fear, of danger in us. As we write this study of the war as it affected India directly as a part of the British Empire, as a dependent part of the British Empire, and indirectly as a part of the modern world where distant country have been brought near one another through technological improvement in methods of inter-communications, India appeared to have developed a certain philosophic indifference to events happening in Europe. For eight years India had been watching the inexplicable weaknesses of British foreign policy, for eight years she, an original member of the League of Nations, had been witnessing leading nations of the world breaking all the conventions of this super-national organisation, the last hope of peace in the modern world, the last shield of the better life that science and its triumphs promised to the men and women of the world. Britain and France were leaders of the League of Nations. But their politicians took the lead in betraying all the hopes and ambitions that sustained human life under all the stresses and strains of modern life. And witnessing these weaknesses and betrayals, the people in India were bewildered in their thoughts and activities with reference to international developments; they also shared the universal bitterness of disappointment with things as these happened in Manchuria, Abyssinia, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia and China where Japan, Italy and Germany had one after another extinguished the light of democracy and national self-respect in these countries.

It is in the background of such disappointments and ~~that~~ that India's attitude to the war in Europe can be explained in the period the events during which form the subject-matter of this study. There was no doubt that India's sympathies were wholly with Poland in her fight against the Nazi aggression for the protection of her national independence. Successive generations of Indian sub-

Her instinctive  
sympathy  
with Poland



lic men and publicists during the last one hundred years whom British methods of administration and enlightenment had roused to a sense of their political helplessness, to the shame and ignominy of political subjection, have been inspired in their struggles for the political freedom of their country by the life and conduct of men and women of other lands, among whom were many who bore Polish names. They had read of the 'three partitions of Poland beginning with 1772 and ending with 1792 through the help of which Prussia, Austria and Russia had divided the country among themselves, and how since then Polish patriots, men and women, had worked and conspired to throw off the foreigners' yoke and restore to their country the glory that was hers when Poland under John Sobieski saved eastern Europe for Christendom when his army beat the Turkish army from the ramparts of Vienna just as three centuries back Charles Martel had defeated the Moors at the battle of Tours and saved Western Europe from the followers of the Prophet of Arabia. With traditions of heroism and national self-respect like these the people of India have had an instinctive sympathy. This feeling was strengthened by the feeling of repulsion at the methods which Prussia and Germany under Prussia had adopted in suppressing Polish freedom and keeping the Polish people under subjection.

The history of Poland has recorded these. And without going through the whole history of the relation between Poland and Germany, a few extracts from the book of Prince Bernhard Von Bulow entitled *Imperial Germany*, published in 1914, will give us an idea of it explaining certain of the causes of the present war started on Polish soil on September 1, 1939. Prince Bulow was Chancellor of the German Empire during a part of the first decade of the present century under ex-Kaiser William who lost the throne in 1918 as one of the consequences of the German defeat during the last World war.

Bitter Relation  
between  
Poland & Germany

"It was a mission of civilisation that in the past led us Germans across the Elbe and the Oder towards the East."

"For centuries the German colonists, often summoned to the country by its Kings, lived as loyal Polish subjects and taught the Poles higher civilisation."

"The annexation by the Prussian State of our Eastern Provinces, Posen, and West Prussia, would not and could not have come to pass if the Polish Republic of Nobles had been a State capable of continued existence."

"The King (Frederick the Great) too only continued what had been begun in the Middle Ages, the national conquest of the East of Germany by means of settling German farmers in the country, and German artisans, merchants and tradesmen in the towns."

"The task of solving the problem would probably have been easier for the Prussians and for the Poles if the artificial and untenable Grand Duchy of Warsaw, created by Napoleon, had not roused in the Poles the vain hope that in the course of European complications it might be possible to re-establish Polish Independence. The Poles would very likely have been spared the painful experience on our side as well on the other side of the frontier in 1800, 1806, 1809, if the memory of the ephemeral creation of a State by the first Napoleon had not lived in their hearts."

"Bismarck in 1860 inaugurated this national policy in the Eastern Marches on a large scale, after he had introduced State control of the schools in 1872, and in 1873 (introduced) the German language as that which was to be used for instruction."

"Under Bismarck, Prussia began to take the offensive in order to rescue German minorities in the East, to maintain it and, if possible, to strengthen

It is natural that the Poles were thrown into a state of violent excitement, that they prepared to defend themselves, and with their splendid organisation, largely supported by the Polish clergy, plunged into the fray. The antagonism between the two nationalities became more acute."

"The seventy years from the Congress of Vienna and the inauguration of the Prussian policy of colonisation made it clear that neither scrupulous respect for Polish nationality, nor ignoring of the nationality question in the East, could in the least prevent German nationality from being slowly but surely driven out of the East by that of the Poles."

"The work of colonisation is the back-bone of Prussian policy in the Eastern Marches, for it settles Germans in the Eastern domain. And the whole problem in those parts is the problem of the relative numerical strength of the German population as compared with the Poles."

"...While the Poles thought it shameful to sell lands to the Germans, these latter unfortunately often did not object to selling German landed property to the Poles for a higher price."

"But it grew more and more difficult to acquire estates from Polish landholders...If the work of colonisation... was not to be doomed to ultimate failure, an idea had to be put into practice which Bismarck had expressed already in 1866, and which was discussed over and over again subsequently: the idea of dispossession. The Dispossession Bill (1906) was the logical conclusion of the policy of colonisation begun in 1866."

"The struggle for the land, which in its essentials is a struggle to permeate eastern districts with a sufficient of Germans, will always be the Alpha and Omega of our national German policy in the East."

"It is quite comprehensible that the Austrian monarchy, which is not a State based on a foundation of one nationality, has, for reasons of home and foreign policy, renounced all further attempts to Germanise the Crown land in Galicia since the Seventies, and has responded in the most lavish manner to Polish wishes."

The quotations from a rather old book give us an idea of the centuries-old, the ten-centuries-old, competition and conflict between the Poles and the Germans. These show that the rise and fall of empires have no influence over racial competitions for supremacy; that the fall of the German Empire and the rise of National Socialist regime in its place have not brought any change in the economic and cultural competition between the Teuton represented by the Germans and the Slav represented by the Poles; that a historic continuity persists between Bismarck and Hitler, not to go very much back than the life of men and women who have lived through the last fifty years. The competition between the Poles and the Germans may appear to have been partially removed or neutralised by the Treaty of Versailles. But the rise of Nazism drawing its inspiration from crude philosophy and chaotic geo-politics has revived hopes of Germanisation that have launched Europe into another war. A vast amount of literature has been raised on these ideas which have challenged those that have moulded the mind, thought and activities of European and American nations for about four centuries. Respect for the individual who has a purpose to fulfil apart from that of the society to which he belongs, the democratic system in the organisation of the State, that is equality in the political plane, were the formative ideas of the Illumination that prepared the ground for the French Revolution and have been guiding principles for men and women in society during the last one hundred and fifty years. An interpreter of European history during this period, Leonard Woolf, has traced the working of a "trinity of metaphysical postulates" on which the European mind and

Nazism—its disrespect to human personality

woman have moved in their endeavours to make human life tolerable in this world. The early democrats, said he, "maintained not only that all men have a right to happiness but that all men are born equal and have a right to liberty. Thus from the beginning there have been in the psychology of democracy three different motifs: happiness, equality, and liberty or freedom." The names of venerated men and women in European thought are claimed on behalf of these new challenges to the way of life and thought that the modern men and women have travelled on and which have blasted their way into the older regions of Asia and Africa, the homes of ancient civilisations. These names are many; they belong to different countries; and under the inspiration of their thought 20th century democracy has found its "most dangerous antagonist in a system which subordinates the rights and interests of individuals to those of a class vaguely known" and vaguely publicised as the supreme and sovereign people. Thus have modern developments, which opened out with such hopes for the individual and the collection of individuals which is society, developed into a state of things that looks like a parody on all that the human mind has been struggling to realise in life, individual and social. And the writer whom we have quoted above has been true, though he is cruel, when he wrote that

"Democracy and the industrialization which has accompanied it give enormous opportunities for the production of the sheep-like mind. Mass education, mass government, mass production encourage material and mental uniformity, and the scale of social life becomes so large that the individual seems lost and helpless."

The feeling of this individual helplessness in face of the complexities of modern life is the breeding ground of those forces in the modern world, impersonal forces, that are known as Fascism, Nazism, and Communism. Possibly because these have yet to make their way in the world, yet to be accepted by the mind and conscience of the modern men and women, that they are characterised by a virulence of violence which is thought to be the passport to authority in the State. The German version of this development which is known as Nazism has certain characteristics, however, which set it apart from its brother totalitarianisms. The exaltation of the Nordic race, pure and undefiled, which would "renovate" the world from the poison of materialism implicit in the democratic ideal, the unification of the German race under one State—one People, one State, one Leader—the inevitable opposition between the Atlantic and the democratic countries that cling to the western sea-board of Europe, and the States of the Plains that stretch from north Germany deep into the Asiatic continent—Germany and Russia—and their partnership in the coming fight, the conflict between the peoples of the land masses and the peoples of the sea-boards—these are said to supply the motive power to the portents and the promises that have issued from Germany typified in the person of Herr Hitler. Sir Halford Macpherson, who was professor of Geography at the Oxford University in a lecture at the Royal Geographical Society not forth (1904) the destiny of the "pivot of history"—the "heart land of the Old World"—the great plain stretching from the Nile to the north of Assam, the stretch of the great plain, the Danube and the other European rivers which had reached

"the scourges of God" like Attila, Genghiz Khan, and Timurlane. He elaborated this thesis in a book entitled—*Democratic Ideas and Realities* published in 1919. Major-General Haushofer of the Bavarian Army imported into the theme a lot of mysticism when he glorified those "conquering races". Rudolf Hess, Herr Hitler's deputy in the Nazi Party, was his aid-de-camp during the first World War. And it is on record that Haushofer inflamed the Leader of Germany when in 1920 he had begun to brood over the causes of the defeat of Germany in that war, and was laying the foundation of the Nazi Party.

There are elements of mysticism in these ideas which have managed to hold millions as its instruments, as captives to their work of destruction and construction. But these divested of their mysticism appear to constitute a conflict and competition between the German race or people, between Germany defeated in a great war and defrauded of their just rights as a great Power by the victorious Powers, Britain and France. These peoples have for about a century and half been bossing over the world. The feeling of German frustration may be traced, however, to an earlier date, centuries anterior to the Treaty of Versailles. The founder of the modern school of history in Germany, Heinrich Treitsche, begun his "German History" with the words that bring vividly to the mind the desire and aspiration of the leaders of the German people :

"In spite of the length of their history, the German people is the youngest of the great nations of Western Europe. A period of youth has twice fallen to their lot, and with it the struggle to establish their power as a State, and to gain freedom for civilisation. A thousand years ago they founded the proudest empire of the Germans; eight hundred years later they had to build up their State anew on quite different foundations, and it is only in our times that as a united people, they entered the ranks of the nations."

When Trietsche uttered these words the family of rulers, the Hapsburg, under which the Germans had founded their proudest empire a thousand years ago, had been already eclipsed by a new family of rulers, the Hohensollerns. It was under the latter that Bismarck brought about the unification of Germany after defeating the Danes, the Austrians and the French. It was a ruler of this family that staked on a fight the choice between world domination and downfall during the years 1914-1918. He lost the war. And a new leader has issued from the lowest strata of German society to build up a new State on quite different foundations where princes and prelates counted for little. This ruler has retrieved the position lost during the days when Germany and Austria touched the depth of political defeat; he has united under one State regions of German domicile that were dispersed under many States; he has got hold of regions that would be filled up by men and women of German race, as their *Lebensraum*, living space for his people. He has thus—in a way fulfilled the purpose of German history which prince or noble failed to do. But in doing this work he and his followers have adopted methods so repellent, so cruel, so ruthless that the world appears to have been startled into organising itself and putting itself against all

that Herr Hitler and his followers stand for. The treatment of Jews by the rulers of modern Germany, of men and women of Jewish parentage who have contributed to the making of German greatness in fields of scholarship, in the arts and sciences of life, has revealed to humanity a side of human nature that decent people cannot view except with disgust. This is the meaning of the sympathy that the victims of the Nazi polity of "blood and iron" have received from far and near. But since 1933 it has been amply proved that sympathy coined in deeds and not in words must be forthcoming if the evil was to be halted. After many betrayals and backslidings, Britain and France, leaders of democracy in Europe, were forced to take up the Nazi challenge and declare war against Germany in the opening days of September, 1939.

The people of India were not interested in the details of the controversy between Poland and Germany, between Britain, France and Germany that have led to the war. Their inclusion within the British Empire created all the interest in the affair, material and spiritual. The defeat of Poland within a period of seventeen days demonstrated to all

**The shock of  
Russo-German  
Pact**

the world the power of Germany and the weaknesses of the Polish State. The military weakness of Poland did not affect us so much as its spiritual debacle. The ruling classes of the country showed a supineness that has remained inexplicable to the world. The Russo-German Pact of the last week of August, 1939, had prepared the world for some such result, as it hastened the German attack on Poland. And the partition of Poland between Germany and Russia gave the world a new insight into international affairs which was full of disappointment and sorrow. For years the world had been taught to regard Soviet Russia as a factor for peace, for international decency, as a defender of the rights of small nations, of the principle of self-determination, as a protector of the victimations of aggression and exploitation. The Russo-German Pact gave a rude shock to this impression, to this belief. It exposed a cynicism and opportunism in the ruling classes of Russia and Germany that has few parallels in recent history. For years the sky has been kept rent with cries of the deathless antagonism between Nazism and Communism or Bolshevism. Apart from ideological differences which were made much of in Herr Hitler's auto-biography and of the progress of his ideas and political policies, there were material causes of conflict between Russia and Germany which were not kept secret by the rulers of the latter country. As late as November, 1936, Herr Hitler in his inaugural address at the Nazi Congress at Nuremberg spoke of having at their disposal

"the incalculable wealth and stores of raw materials of the Ural mountains, the vast forests of Siberia and the unending fertile plains of the Ukraine to be exploited under National Socialist leadership."

This open declaration of the desire of German leaders to seize Russian territory indicated the material basis of Russo-German competition and conflict which also formed the basis of many of the political and defence arrangements of different States in Europe, Asia and America. As an instance of this the case Anglo-French negotiations with Russia for an offensive and defensive alliance

may be referred to. On the 15th March, 1939 Germany annexed Czechoslovakia. This step appeared to have startled Mr. Neville Chamberlain out of his illusion of "appeasement". On the morning of the 18th of March a British enquiry was addressed to Moscow: "Would Russia support Rumania, if attacked?" In the evening of the same day Russia proposed a "Six-Power Conference"—of Russia, Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey—to be held at Bucharest, capital of Rumania, "to devise steps against aggression." Lord Halifax rejected it as "premature" and proposed instead "a Four-Power declaration"—of Russia, Britain, France and Poland—of "an undertaking to consult together if aggression occurred in any part of Europe." Russia accepted it while declaring it "inadequate"; Poland opposed it, and the plan was abandoned. Then commenced an unending series of proposals and counter-proposals which came to nothing, and ended in the defeat of Anglo-French diplomacy with the signature of the Russo-German Pact on the 23rd of August, 1939. Meanwhile on March 31 and April 13 Britain had offered "unilateral guarantee of support" to Poland, Rumania, and Greece. Russia was neither consulted about nor informed of these events. On April 15 Britain asked Russia to offer "unilateral support" to Poland and Rumania. Russia objected to this as "inadequate" and submitted counter-proposals, eight in number of which three were important—(i) a Triple Alliance of the "Big Three"—Britain, France and Russia—to resist "direct" aggression against any one of them"; (ii) the simultaneous conclusion of a military convention; (iii) joint guarantee to all the smaller States between the Baltic and Black Seas. For 22 days there was no reply from Britain. On June 21 Britain offered new proposals—Russian support to be "automatic" if Britain and France should get involved in war through their guarantees to the five States—Poland, Rumania, Belgium, Turkey and Greece; but if Russia was involved through guarantees to the Baltic States, "consultations must first be held." Russia rejected on the next day this "unequal formula". The negotiations appear to have broken down on the definition of "indirect aggression", and on the refusal of Poland to allow the march of Russian soldiers into her territory even for the protection of her political integrity. This was reported on the 17th July. But thirteen days later, on the 31st July, we found the British Premier making the announcement that in response to the request of the Soviet Government deputations from the British and French army and air forces would be leaving for Moscow to begin "staff conversations". It was hoped that these "military conversations" would pave the way to the success of political negotiations.

We do not know as yet why these conversations failed to reach the desired object as neither the British nor the French Governments have cared to make public their version of the causes of this failure; the version of the Soviet Government have not seen the light of day in the Allied countries. In the absence of this knowledge speculations have sought to fill up the gap, further gutturing the relation between the west European democracies

Reasons for this  
failure yet  
unpublished

of Britain and France, and the Soviet Republic. It has been suggested that both the parties to the negotiations were insincere in their efforts, that the ruling classes of Britain did not seriously want to bring in Soviet Russia into the affairs of western Europe, that what they did in the way of negotiations was a mere blind to their own people, a sop thrown to them to stop the wide-spread cry for an arrangement that would hold Russia as a threat to Germany. Criticism of Russia has taken the shape of a charge of positive duplicity. Mr. Chamberlain in announcing the Russo-German Pact uttered words that bear no other construction :

"We had shown a great amount of trust, a strong desire to bring the negotiations with the Soviet Union to a successful conclusion when we agreed to send our soldiers and air-men to discuss military plans together before we had an assurance that we should be able to reach an agreement on political matters."

We have seen suggestions made that British and French resentment at and ignorance of the tendency of Russo-German relationship was a put-up affair. Historians have told us that

A curious ignorance shown by Britain & France

the need for an understanding with Russia was the corner-stone of Bismarck's policy, that it was "the first commandment of the German Decalogue." It is hard to believe that the British and French Foreign Ministers and their offices were ignorant of the goings-on between Germany and Russia when the Press in Europe, specially in the United States, was featuring in the month of July the signature of a new Russo-German Pact or treaty. It is hard to believe that the Intelligence Service of the British and French Foreign Offices did not know that up till 1935 there were allowed to be German military and aviation schools stationed on Russian soil, as has been asserted by Peter Drucker in his book—*The End of Economic Man*—published in May, 1939. It is hard to believe that the British and French Intelligence Services did not know of the *camaraderie* that had existed between the German and Russian General Staffs for about fifteen years which was broken or was reported to have been broken after the rise of Nazism. It has been suggested that in the "staff conversations" that continued between Britain and France on the one part and Russia on the other, the latter was playing a part on behalf of Germany to get an inside view of Franco-British military dispositions. But there are two rational explanations that fit into the situation as it affected both Germany and Russia. The former was prepared to make any sacrifice to avoid the dangerous possibility of having to fight Great Britain and France on the west and Russia in the east as it had to do during 1914-1917. The latter also could not contemplate the idea of having to fight or defend against Germany in the west and Japan in the east as the Berlin-Tokyo Axis had provided for. It was a piece of deft diplomacy that enabled two such declared enemies as Germany and Russia to make up their differences, to forget their animity.

Another explanation was that the ruling classes of Soviet Russia had not given up their idea and ideal of a proletarian world revolution.

Diplomacy of Soviet Russia

While the Communists had continued to be openly provocative of such a development, the Russian rulers had sung in a minor tune. But there was a purpose in this change when the word went out of Moscow to Communist groups or officials

the world over that henceforth (since 1933) the word revolution was to be never or seldom uttered, that peace and international co-operation were to be the new watchwords. This change has been traced to the more subtle and far-seeing brain of Stalin. And the method of "United or Popular Front" was devised by Dimitrov, Secretary-General of the Comintern, for "unobtrusively undermining the enemy bastions which had so obstinately withstood the Bolshevik frontal attacks," to quote from an article in the last November number of the London *Fortnightly*. The writer of the article supports his contention by quoting from the speech of Stalin delivered at the Party Congress held as late as in March, 1939 :

"The principles of the sister-parties must consist in facilitating the outbreak of a general war...Revolutionary action on a large scale will only be possible if we succeed in exploiting the antagonism between the capitalistic States to precipitate them into an armed conflict."

If the words quoted above be true, we have in them a clue to the sudden reversal of the Russian policy. For, there cannot be any manner of doubt that the Russo-German Pact hastened the German attack on Poland by assuring Germany that she had nothing to fear from the east if she got entangled in a war. The division or partition of Poland between Germany and Russia at the end of the swift campaign of seventeen days only was an arranged affair, could not but be an arranged affair. Germany was released from anxiety in the east, and thus enabled to turn her whole attention to the west. And, in the deepening intensity of the war when both the parties would get exhausted, and social and economic disorganisation would ensue in the warring countries, the rulers of Soviet Russia hoped to reap all the harvest of advantages, and would find the long-looked-for opportunity for effecting the proletarian world revolution or spreading its message to war-weary peoples. It is in this light that an increasing number of people interpret the Russo-German Pact.

We have devoted this much space to a discussion of the developments in Europe that preceded and followed the declaration of war in Europe, though it has yet refused to develop into World War No. II of the 20th century. Not because India was directly affected by them but because they taught us many lessons in international politics where idealism and truth and justice have no place—things which we are in the habit of making much of. They teach us what politics really is and has been since creation ; they indicate for us the path of national duty on which we should walk, unswayed by sentimentalism and ideologies. These have wafted into India a cynicism and opportunism in politics that are foreign to our nature which has so long been sheltered from all contact with the needs and requirements of State affairs. Of nearer interest to us in India, however, during this period were the things that were happening in China subjected to the "civilising mission" of Japan, which has extorted as its price millions of men, women and children killed and maimed, thousands of cities, towns and villages burnt and destroyed, centres of university life bombed and burnt, centres of industrial life sharing the same fate. For more than two

To weaken  
capitalist states

Japan civilising  
mission in China



years these abominations have been happening so that Japan may have the glory and the satisfaction of establishing "a new order in the Far East"

The human mind has been seeking for and trying to find out since unremembered centuries the necessity for or the justification of such cruelties and violences in order to establish newer and better relation between men and men, between societies and societies, between peoples and peoples. That it has been a vain quest is demonstrated before our very eyes who in course of a life-time have seen a world war and the beginnings of another. And as things are at present arranged, mankind cannot derive a higher satisfaction, intellectual and moral, than what is contained and carried in the following words of Trietsche :

**War & conquest**  
—**"moral forces of history"**

"War and conquest are the only means towards the right ; they can only prove that the victor possesses the moral superiority whereon the right to rule is based ; but they alone cannot base a right to rule on physical domination...Dense weeds have long been growing over the countless deeds of violence which were needful for the foundation of the governmental unity of all Europe's great nations. The wrong done during the agitations for unity among the Germans and Italians is now-a-days, after a few years, hardly felt, because the nations' sense of right says to itself that those revolutions only buried the dead and exalted the living."

It is this philosophy of history that has raised wars and violences into "moral forces of history", and induced in the human mind and conscience a spirit of toleration of evil deeds associated with them. And what have been happening in China will, after a few years, be given a honoured place in history in accordance with Trietsche's dictum.

But we who are witnesses of these abominations, we in India may in the near future be affected by the advance of Japan's power in China. Even in the Central Legislature of India anxious members have been questioning the Defence Secretary about the distance of India, of the eastern borders of India, from Japan's latest acquired positions in China, about the range of Japanese bombers from the "No Man's Land" east of Sadiya in Assam which may acquire the same sinister significance in the life of India as certain of the regions in the north-west of India. All these dangerous possibilities, however, lie in the womb of the future. But we have every reason to get afraid of the various complications that face us as a result of our political helplessness inside the scheme of political grouping known as the British Empire. The Imperial Government of Britain has got entangled in war the end of which is distant. In our neighbourhood in China, the material interests of Britishers and the prestige of the British name have been suffering attacks and insults at the hands of Japan. In July last the world was witness to a strange sight when at Tientsin, one of the "treaty-ports" in China, British men and women were insulted by Japanese soldiers, and the British Government could only record and send protests against these indignities. It was apparent that Japan was determined to take advantage of British pre-occupation in Europe, of Britain's difficulties in Europe, to advance her own interests and demonstrate her new-born sense of importance as a major Power of the world. The British Premier, Mr. Chamberlain, honestly recognised the difficulties that stood in the way of Britain teaching ~~unhappy~~ to

Japan. In course of a debate in the House of Commons he said : "At present we have not got in the Far East a fleet superior to that of Japan." And he explained the reasons of this weakness, of this comparative weakness in material strength in the regions in the Pacific :

"We have been compelled by force of circumstances to undertake some very heavy liabilities and commitments in Europe. The effect of these commitments is that if certain things were to happen, this country would have to go to war. It is impossible to undertake the same commitments in the Far East, and there are limits to which it is prudent for us to confine ourselves."

What Mr. Chamberlain mildly indicated in the words quoted above was brought out clearly by Lord Cecil of Chelwood in course of a speech in the House of Commons on the same day. His being an Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in a previous Government added significance to his speech :

"I recognise that for us to face a possible naval attack on our possessions in the Far East would be awkward, but that is a possibility which you must consider if there is Japanese victory in China. In the latter event the whole of our possessions will be swept away...The moment the Japanese have destroyed China, they will certainly turn and destroy us."

This rather pessimistic estimate of the prospect of British possessions and position in the Far East, of the strength of British power in the central Pacific region, was sought to be corrected by Mr. Bywater, naval correspondent of the *London Daily Telegraph & Morning Leader*, in a discussion in that paper. Writing on the subject about this time, he said :

"...even today it will be feasible to despatch to the Pacific a battle squadron of sufficient strength to constitute 'a fleet in being', the existence of which will be a deterrent to any large scale adventure overseas by Japan ....the British Government has definitely promised Australia that such a squadron will be sent to Singapore, if necessary. If a squadron was sent it would be joined by at least ten cruisers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand stations, and a destroyer flotilla of fifteen of our best submarines not to mention many additional units which would be despatched to the danger zone from home and foreign stations."

This discussion in the House of Commons and in the British Press are an indication of the danger that has been approaching the shores of India with the development of the war in China. The naval base at Singapore was built on the recommendation of the late Admiral Jellicoe after his Empire tour of inspection for suggesting means to co-ordinate the defences of the British Empire, the naval defence in this case. It was built with money supplied by the Imperial Government, by the Australian Government, and by the Chiefs and the British administration of the Malaya Archipelago. Though the Bay on which it stands is more in the Indian Ocean than in the Pacific, the naval base at Singapore has become the corner-stone of Britain's imperial strategy in that ocean. It has the military strength of India in the rear, and has on its flanks the bases stationed in Hongkong and northern Australia. Thus does it happen that the problem of Indian defence has got entangled or allied with war measures in the Pacific with defence against the growing ambitions of Japan. This arrangement has not risen suddenly out of the needs created by Japan's "China Affair". We know that Hongkong has been rendered almost ineffective as an instrument for the defence of British interests in



the Far East. The more than four hundred crores of British money invested in China's trade, commerce and manufactures, in the towns, ports and dockyards that have been built to advance these, are today so many hostages in the hands of Japan who has been using these as so many screws to press concessions from Britain. But the building of Singapore has been a provision for the day when Japan may be driven by ambition to move beyond the China Seas. This was fore-seen even as far back as 1919 when the British Imperial Government appointed the Esher Committee. One of the terms of reference to the Committee was to suggest and devise means for the co-ordination of India's defence arrangements with those for Imperial defence. The Committee reported that the experiences of World War No. I had "made it clear that India's partnership in the Empire demanded that the organisation of her forces should conform closely to the rest of the forces of the Empire."

The Chatfield Committee which was appointed (1938) to indicate "the role of the Land and Air Forces of India in relation to the Defence problems of India and the Empire" and whose report was made available to the Indian public early in September last after the declaration of the present war, recognised the liability of India for the defence of the Empire. The report frankly recognised that "the size of the Army in India will hereafter be decided not entirely by the Government of India but in consultation with the British Government", that its function will be regulated to a certain extent by Imperial necessities. Under this extended responsibility for the defence of certain strategic points in the west and the east—Aden and Egypt and Singapore—India must shoulder an increasing burden. Sir Robert Cassels, Commander-in-Chief in India, in a broadcast on September 6 last on the Government's decisions on the Chatfield Committee's Report, indicated the necessity of this extended responsibility thrown on India. He wanted the "listeners" to realise what it would mean if Malaya and the great fortress at Singapore fell into enemy hands. Their loss would mean the loss of Burma, would mean that the whole of the eastern coastline of India would be liable to bombardment by sea and air, that a "Burma, in hostile hands, would be a pistol pointed at the heart of Bengal." Looking west he said that the Indian Ocean required for its defence in the conditions of the world's political developments, in the conditions of modern competitions and conflicts between great Powers, that Egypt and the Aden Protectorate should be in friendly hands, friendly to India. Egypt, Aden and the lands on the Persian Gulf have thus come into the scheme of India's defence; it has become of vital interest to India and a responsibility of hers that she should face squarely this aspect of her external relations, of her own defence requirements. To quote the words of the "Military Despatch No. 5" issued by the British Government, "in her own interests," India's responsibility cannot any longer be "safely limited to the local defence of her land frontiers and coasts."

The conditions imposed by this extended responsibility for the defence of her "outposts" on the west and the east, and the growing

needs of highly "modernised" forces have put a financial burden on India that her exchequer could not bear and to India made by Britain sustain. It is a costly business to have mechanised and armoured cavalry divisions, to have mechanized transport for the infantry, to have tanks and aeroplanes. Even though mechanisation may reduce the number of men employed in the fighting services, even though a certain number of British regiments—two Cavalry Regiments, six Infantry Battalions, and three Artillery Regiments—have been transferred from the Indian establishment, the cost of modernisation, of the maintenance of the modernised Land, Air and Naval services and forces would require finances that India could not provide. Recognising this handicap the British Government has accepted the recommendations of the Chatfield Committee and decided to make "a free gift of Rs. 33 and a half crores" to be spread over five years, and another 11 crores as loan to be repaid in instalments, making a total of about Rs. 45 crores to be spent on the re-organisation and re-armament of the fighting forces of India. This was in addition to the capital sum of about Rs. 6 crores and the yearly grant of about Rs. 2 crores that have been contributed since 1933 by the British Government in terms of the findings of the Garran Committee which has enabled certain British and Indian units of the Indian Army to be re-equipped, and certain squadrons of the Royal Air Force in India to undergo the same reorganisation.

This handsome gift made by the British Government has been accepted by the leaders of Indian public opinion as part of the payment of the far-off interest withheld by Britain these one hundred years and more, interest due to her acts of omission and commission in the matter of organising the forces and resources of India for the defence of her frontiers. Since the days of Lord Beaconsfield who as Premier of Britain was the prime mover of a new Imperialism of which much later Rudyard Kipling was the strident post-laureate, Indian public men and publicists have been drawing attention to the injustice of saddling the Indian Exchequer with the cost of maintaining British forces in India. The attitude of India with regard to this stationing of about 60,000 British soldiers in India and maintaining them at the expense of India was given reasoned expression to by two Indian members of the Garran Tribunal, Sir Shadi Lal and Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman, in the following terms :

"Since 1856-57 the British and Indian troops maintained by India have been employed by the Imperial Government on no fewer than 14 campaigns outside the boundaries of India. India has been treated, to quote the language of the late Lord Salisbury (Premier of Britain during certain years of the last two decades of the 19th century) as an 'English barrack in the Oriental Seas'...Service in India affords the British troops valuable opportunities of active service in frontier wars. The experience thus gained in India tends to increase the general efficiency of the British Army, and to enhance its value for purposes of war...The Army in India is maintained and employed for hostilities on its frontiers. But these frontiers are mainly Imperial frontiers."

The quotation made above supports the Indian contention that

India has supplied a training-ground to British soldiers ; that this arrangement has been of material and moral benefit to Britain. Enemies of Britain, possible enemy countries, have also contended that the real size of the British army has all these years been kept concealed inside India's military establishment ; that India has kept Britain supplied with a steady flow of trained soldiers by the return of British soldiers who had served their time in India. The financial gain of Britain has also been not inconsiderable. During discussions in the Central Legislature on Britain's military policy in India it has been contended by Indian members that India has been spending every year more than seven to ten crores to maintain, the inflated pay and pension of British soldiers and officers, thus making every year a "gift" of this amount to the British Exchequer. With this money India could have maintained a bigger army manned by her own nationals ; she could have provided all the mechanism of modern warfare out of her own pocket ; she need not have waited on the pleasure or the policy of the Imperial British Government for the supply of the finance or the personnel and the materials of modern fighting forces, for her Army, Navy and Air Force. During the discussion on an adjournment motion on the Chatfield Committee's Report moved on the 5th of September last complaints and criticism like these were made by Indian members, and the whole subject of the British policy, the military policy in India, was passed through a crucible. It was felt and said that the Chatfield Report was a rather belated recognition of the wrong done to India, an attempt at rectification or reparation which may prove to be too late in view of the grave international situation.

It was in the background of developments in international affairs, of the worsening of international affairs, that India's reaction to the war started by Germany has to be understood. On the 3rd of September, 1939, the Government of Britain declared war against Germany in fulfilment of their pledges to Poland. On the same day, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Linlithgow, made it known that India was at war with Germany—"it is in these circumstances that we find ourselves at war with Germany," said he in "A Message to India." On the 4th of September the Government of India published the substance of the main recommendations that had been made by the Chatfield Committee in May, 1939. To the Indian public these recommendations and the decisions of the Imperial Government thereon did not bring any message of hope or any great assurance. There was a natural irritation that what should have been done years ago should be attempted to be done when India was already pushed into a war and when Japan's ambition to establish "a new order in eastern Asia" held a threat to the peace and tranquillity of India and her neighbours, north and east. This irritation was strengthened by the feeling that India must be a helpless witness to these developments, neither able to help herself nor good for any effective help to others. The eloquent language used by Lord Linlithgow in his message struck on chords that were responsive to the urge of the "inner

Principles for  
which the  
Allies  
have been  
fighting

and spiritual forces which in all the great emergencies of life are the true and unfailing source of strength and fortitude." The instinctive sympathy of India for people whose freedom is in danger, for victims of aggression, for peoples who are politically unfree, has been a permanent factor in India's international affiliations, if a dependent country could be said to have a consistent international policy. But it was unnatural to expect that the people of India, the classes and the masses, those that were interested in public affairs and those that were passive observers of public affairs, would not relate the high sentiments expressed in Lord Linlithgow's message to the reality of the situation in India, would not apply them to the conditions of Indian life developed by and under British methods of administration and enlightenment. When His Excellency spoke of the purpose of the war as it had been reflected on the mind and conscience of the Allied peoples and their ruling classes—"the safeguarding of principles vital to the future of humanity, principles of international justice and international morality, the principle that civilised man must agree to settle disputes between nations by reason and not by force, the principle that in the affairs of men the law of the jungle, the will of the strongest, cannot be allowed to prevail"—it was difficult to resist the impulse of testing these under the Indian sky, specially when India was being called upon to "play a part worthy of her place among the great nations and the historic civilisations of the world".

The response to this appeal was spontaneous as it expressed itself in the words of Gandhiji in a statement made on the 5th September :

I am not, therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled ?"

This attitude reached the highest water-mark of disinterestedness. But there appeared to be few, whether in India or in Britain, to appreciate it. That the declaration indicated the attitude of a

**Gandhiji's response to Viceroyal appeal** single man did not detract anything from its high quality. Many in the world must have felt like this. But in affairs of State humanity has not been able to develop a machinery that would make effective the processes of such disinterestedness. Gandhiji's mental agony and spiritual travail have, therefore, been unable to influence policy either in India or in Britain. And though he is the guide and philosopher of the Congress, has been so for the last twenty years, and though he had thought it to be the best policy that "what support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally," he found himself "alone" in thinking so when the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee, the supreme executive of the institution, met at Wardha from the 8th September to the 15th, and for about five days wrestled with the problem of India's attitude to the war as she had been made a belligerent in it without her consent and without consultation with non-official Indian opinion.

On the 14th September, it issued a long Statement defining its attitude in course of which British policy so far as it related to the Congress problem of national freedom and democracy in general and in particular of India came under a searching examination which was not at all complimentary to British policy.

chians. At the end of the Statement the committee invited the British Government

"...to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of Imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people?"

This searching question was preceded by the expression of India's willingness and eagerness to "help in every way" the struggle that has ensued—the struggle the end of which will be the re-fashioning of the world "for good or ill, politically, socially and economically." Good can come of it if the war-scarred peoples are able to establish a new equilibrium based on "the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another", on the re-organisation "of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all."

In contrast to the sentiments and proposals made in the Statement issued by the Working Committee of the Congress stand those made by the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League embodied in their resolution passed on September 18, 1939. The first para of the resolution expressed appreciation of Lord Linlithgow's action in inviting Mr. Mahommed Ali Jinnah, President of the League, and apprising him of the position regarding the international situation. The second, third and fourth paras were a criticism and condemnation of the Federal Scheme, of the working of "Provincial autonomy" which during its two years' experiment

"has resulted wholly in a permanent communal majority and the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minority whose life and liberty, property and honour, are in danger and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Government in various provinces."

The fifth para spoke of "Muslim India" ever standing against the "exploitation of the people of India", of their favouring "a free India", while they were "equally opposed to the domination of the Hindu majority over Muslims and other minorities and vassalisation of Muslim India." The sixth para dealt with the attitude of the Muslim League towards the war; it condemned unprovoked aggression and "the doctrine that might is right", upheld "the principles of freedom of humanity" and the principle "that the will of the strongest irrespective of right and justice cannot be allowed to prevail"; it expressed sympathy with Poland, England and France. Alongside these admirable sentiments it indicated the conditions that must have to be fulfilled if "real and solid Muslim co-operation and support to Great Britain in this hour of her trial" were to be secured. Part of these conditions was indicated in this para. This real and solid support could not be forthcoming

"if His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy are unable to secure to the Mussalmans justice and fair play in the Congress-governed provinces where to-day their liberty, person, property and honour are in danger and even their elementary rights are being solemnly trampled upon."

The seventh para declared that the Muslim League stood for "the freedom of India" but urged upon His Majesty's Government and asked for

"an assurance that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval."

The seventh para of the resolution referred to the Palestine question and urged upon His Majesty's Government "to satisfy the Arab national demand." The eighth para in language a little varied suggested the method by which the British Government could secure "full effective co-operation of the Mussalmans" by creating "a sense of security and satisfaction" amongst them, and by taking into "confidence the Muslim League which is the only organisation that can speak on behalf of Muslim India." The quotations we have made above go to show that the Muslim League was not willing to offer unconditional support to the British Government in the crisis that faced the latter, that it attached certain conditions the fulfilment of which would range "Muslim India" on the side of the Allies. During the whole period we have been dealing with, this attitude of the Muslim League has remained unaltered, though it has allowed two of its leaders, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Premier of the Punjab and Moulvi Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal, to function, and pledge "their aid unconditionally in the struggle." This aid called forth "special gratification" from the Secretary of State for India, the Marquis of Zetland, while "very real appreciation" was expressed of the support of the other Ministries "in putting into operation" the Defence of India rules and measures.

The *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind*, the organisation of the Muslim divines of India, was more uncompromising in their attitude, and in a resolution passed by its Working Committee held on September 16, 17 and 18, it declared that considering all the factors of the situation, examining the record of the imperialism of Britain, there was "no valid reason to support (it) in this war."

*Jamiat-ul-  
Ulema-i-Hind's  
attitude*

The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha extended at a meeting held on September 10 general support to Britain in the war while condemning "the spirit of bargaining" and of taking advantage of the present crisis for the promotion of purely communal interests at the expense of national well-being." It recognised that the task of defending India from any military attack is "of common concern to the British Government as well as to Indians", that as the latter were "not in a position to carry out that responsibility unaided," there was "ample room for co-operation between India and England." And with a view to make such co-operation "effective" the Mahasabha urged "the introduction of responsible Government at the earliest." On the 19th November the Working Committee of the Mahasabha met again to discuss the political situation in India "in the light of the Viceregal announcements and the speeches in the House of Commons and the House of Lords concerning India." It emphasised that

*All-India  
Hindu Maha-  
sabha & war*



the Mahasabha "refused to look upon Dominion Status as the ultimate goal," but insisted upon it "as an immediate step to be taken towards the final goal of absolute political independence." The resolution also thought that

"A definite declaration to that effect can alone evoke a responsible willing co-operation on the part of India. The British Government must bear in mind that India can never extend a willing co-operation unless she feels that the cause of her freedom is likely to be served in a substantial measure by offering responsive co-operation."

The National Liberal Federation whose founders were Congressmen when they seceded from the Congress on the issue of the "Montagu-National Liberal Chelmsford Report," men like Surendra Nath Banerji, Federation and Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, Bhupendra Nath Basu, and All-India Christian whose members carry on the old traditions of public Conference's life, appealed to all Indians "to give their support to support the cause for which the democracies are fighting."

The All-India Christian Conference passed a resolution asking Indians to "offer full and unconditional assistance to the Government for the prosecution of this war" since they stood for principles of freedom, self-determination and a truly democratic form of government. On the political aspect of the situation in India created by the war the Conference said that "the declarations so far made by various statesmen were not satisfactory and fell far short of the requirements of the situation."

We have summarised above the various statements made and resolutions passed by and on behalf of the different political organisations in the country. We will discuss hereafter the British failure to organise Indian defence reason and cogency of some of these. But before we do so, we should say that a study of all of them leave the impression in the mind that Indian feeling and opinion as represented by these were single-pointed on one demand that the forces and resources of the country should be organised to meet the crisis with which India along with the world is being confronted today. Apart from the ideological appeal, the military weakness and helplessness of India forced the conviction on the mind of the leaders of the people that without Indian control over the government of the country its defence could not be properly organised, that the policy adopted and hitherto practised by the British Government in relation to this particular matter has proved to be a failure. The exposure made in the Mesopotamia Commission's 'Report about the failure of the Indian military authorities has not been a sufficiently strong shock to the placidity of the Simla-Delhi bureaucrats. The demonstrated unpreparedness of India at the present juncture is not only a near danger but has opened out a door for future troubles. What these are and may be have been discussed in a previous page on the strength of the opinion of the defence authorities in India. One-tenth of the army in India has for all practical purposes become an Imperial Reserve, to be maintained at the expense of India, for utilisation in defence of British possessions between Egypt and Singapore. The rest of the Indian Army are ill-equipped, unmodernised, to fight in a war under modern conditions, "to meet and defeat the most powerful mechanised armies, tanks, aircraft, gas and hostile infantry heavily armed with modern

light machine-guns and possessed of a high degree of mobility," to quote the words of Sir Robert Cassels, Commander-in-Chief in India. British policy, political and military, has done practically nothing to create in the Indian mind a kinship with India's defence arrangements, any enthusiasm for these. By their theory of the "martial and non-martial" classes in India, British administrators have thrown over the major portion of the country a stigma of inefficiency, helped to create in the people a flabbiness of temper and an indifference to matters that had concern with dangers and difficulties inseparable from the life of a free country.

It was the realisation of these dangers to the unity and integrity of India that explained the demands made on the British Government to make changes in the political and constitutional position of India so that the Indian mind and the Indian intellect might take control of the administration of the country and transform the human and natural wealth of the country into instruments of tempered steel fit to meet the challenge of modern life. With slight variation in emphasis this has been the key-note of the demands pressed on the British Government since the outbreak of the war, since calls came to be made on Indian resources of men and materials to fight in this war, and appeals have been addressed to the idealism of Indians to throw themselves into a war in Europe.

These demands have not been received with good grace by the ruling classes of Britain. These appear to have ruffled their temper, pricked their conceit as a Imperial race, made them "lose face" before all the world. The first official expression to these wounded feelings came out on September 26 in the speech of the Secretary of the State for India in the House of Lords. The Indian National Congress, the organ voice of Indian Nationalism, and its leaders, came in for the sharpest amount of criticism. His Lordship conceded that it was "natural" for them to "take this opportunity of asserting their aims towards a fuller form of self-government than they at present possess"; but the time chosen for asserting these was "unfortunate". It was unfortunate for more than one reason, one of which Lord Zetland indicated as follows :

"I think the British people are very susceptible to a treatment which they regard as honourable and appropriate to a particular occasion. I think they will be very much more willing, when the time comes, to listen to the claims made to them than if they are animated by a spirit of resentment at the choosing of such an occasion for taking action which may be calculated to be embarrassing to them in a life-and-death struggle."

The language of this remonstrance may appear to be unobjectionable, as has been that of all the speeches and statements made officially by men in authority in the Government of Britain, of India. But the spirit that has informed them has been unmistakable, a spirit of resentment at what is regarded to be an exposure. This has led to an irritation on both sides which interviews and discussions between the head of the Indian administration and the leaders of the people have not been able to mitigate or soften. Rather,

the lengthening of discussion and the plethora of interviews and conversations have opened a wider gulf between Indian and Indian, between Indian and Britisher. Further down we will be discussing the differences that have cropped up between Indian and Indian, the psychological and material causes that have helped to create these. The differences between the Indian and the Britisher that are implicit in the unnatural relation between them have to be analysed to reach the elements of truth and fact that create them. The invitation by the Congress to the British Government to state and clarify their war-aims is no solitary war-cry. Members of the British Government have talked of "a new world order" emerging out of the trials and tribulations of the war; they have talked of it as waged for the defence of democracy and freedom, for the defence of the right of small nations to liberty and freedom, to self-determination. These vague generalities have not satisfied even British men of affairs, British thought-leaders. The claim to fight against Hitlerism, against Nazism and all the abominations they stood for, has added confusion to the controversy. We have seen a symposium of opinions of British thought-leaders which expressed dissatisfaction with the vague statements of their rulers on the purposes of the war. Mr. Chamberlain, Premier of Britain, spoke of ridding Europe of the fear of living under the Nazis, forgetting that into the war in Europe had been dragged more men and women who were non-Europeans. Prof. Julian Huxley spoke in the same strain, of "fighting for the future order of Europe, and the continuance of Western civilisation." It is to declarations like these that Dr. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, referred when he said that the issues of the war were "primarily not national nor imperial but of a world order." Mr. H. G. Wells who had something to do with British war propaganda during the last war recalled how the Crewe House organisation did its "unsuccessful best" to draw out from the then Foreign Office a precise statement of the war-aims of Britain and how "the Great War came to a ragged end in mutual accusations of broken promises and double crossing." Prof. Berriedale Keith spoke of the "urgent necessity for the definite formulation by Britain of precise war aims." The wide discussion in the British Press proved that the Congress was in good company in insisting on the clarification of British war-aims, and their application to the peculiar conditions of India. It wanted these things not because it desired to extract certain advantages from Britain, but because it wanted the creation of those psychological conditions in India which would enable the Indian people to play their part in this particular crisis in the world's history, "to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs," to quote the words of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru used in a message sent on October 7 to the London *News Chronicle*.

The general body of British people who take any interest in things concerning India did not understand this simple issue. They felt, and their ruling classes encouraged the feeling, that the Congress being actuated by a hargaining spirit was trying to treat Britain's difficulty as India's opportunity. Lord Holland's

words gave expression to this feeling, and the writings in the British Press with a few honourable exceptions echoed them. The controllers of British opinion did not understand or would not that an unfree India could not be enthused to fight for the defence of the freedom of other peoples, fight for the democracies of other lands. The *Manchester Guardian* appreciated this stand-point when it wrote: "If England stands for self-determination the proof of that should be India." Failure or unwillingness to face such a straight issue on the part of the ruling classes of Britain was responsible for the stalemate that has been reached in Indo-British relation. It was to this mentality that we trace the slighting reference made by Lord Zetland to the leaders of the Congress when he described them as losing "sight, while lifting their eyes to the stars, of the practical difficulties which stand in the way on the ground under their foot." His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in his statement made public on October 17, 1939 was more concrete in his views. To the Congress demand, to the demand of the enlightened public opinion of India, he pointed out that Lord Irwin's interpretation of the Preamble of the Act of 1919 held the ground—which contained in amended language the declaration made on August 20, 1917, by Edwin Samuel Montagu as Secretary of State for India. The relevant portions of that declaration may be put down here as a mile-stone in the political evolution of India under British auspices.

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.....progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and the advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities for service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

Lord Irwin's interpretation was made in November, 1929. It contained the words—"the natural issue of India's progress as there (in the Preamble) contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status." The Joint Parliamentary Committee which reported on the Government of India Bill (1919) did, however, take particular care to declare that

"...Parliament should make it quite plain that the responsibility for the successive stages of the development in India rests on itself and on itself alone, and that it cannot share this responsibility with, much less delegate it to, the newly elected legislatures of India."—(*The Italics are ours.*)

The same policy informed the framers of the Government of India Act of 1935, though Lord Linlithgow sought to minimise the impression by quoting words from the Royal Instrument of Instructions issued to him in May, 1937, laying on him as Governor-General "a direction so to exercise the trust" reposed in him

"that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions."

If the relation between India and Britain had been as natural as between the Dominions and Britain, these declarations would, perhaps, have straightened out matters. But things being as they were, the attributes of Dominionhood in India taking or having taken an unconscionably long time in coming, the needs of the Indian situation, the needs of a war-effort of unimaginable magnitude required on the part of India, made it necessary that a "more widely phrased" indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government", to quote Lord Linlithgow's words, should be made in response to the wide-spread demand and feeling in India. Why this "more widely phrased" declaration on behalf of the British Government has not come, could not come, has not been made clear in the statements of Lord Linlithgow, in the speeches of the British Ministers in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The declaration of India's position as equal to that of the Dominions with the attributes of Dominionhood attached thereto would have partly eased matters. One of the attributes is the right of the Dominions to decide for themselves questions of war, questions of peace, questions of neutrality. During the present war, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Eire have exercised this right. In the first three the Governments could persuade the Legislatures to throw in their lot with the Imperial Government; in the fourth the Government proposed to maintain neutrality, was defeated in the attempt, and was replaced by a Government that elected to throw its influence on the Allied side. The last Dominion has elected to remain neutral though her strategic importance to the safety of Britain herself has made this step a dangerous one for both of them. If we are to believe Mr. Wedgewood Benn, Secretary of State for India in Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour Government, this decision of Eire's has been "without any voice raised in criticism." In law and in practice India was not a Dominion, it is true. But in aspiration, in the potentiality of her development, she is entitled to an equal position with all the constituents of the British Commonwealth to be.

A little imagination on the part of the British politicians would have enabled them to understand that in the crisis of international life precipitated by the arrogance of Germany's rulers, India's exercise of such a right, their allowing India to exercise such a right, would have without any declaration changed the whole face of affairs and established Britain's war-aims on the bed-rock of world appreciation and approbation, would have demonstrated before all the world that Britain has really shed the bad, old traditions of Imperialism. Their lack of this imagination has confronted the British Government with resignation of Ministries in eight out of the eleven provinces of India. And one of the reasons advanced in support of this drastic step was expressed as follows in the resolutions moved by the Premiers of those provinces :

"The Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India, ...."

The resolution was passed by large majorities in seven provincial Assemblies. In one, in Assam, the Ministry resigned without meeting the legislature, basing itself on the same argument. These resignations of Ministries, whose work has been praised by members of the British Ministry, and whose resignations were by anticipation characterised by the Secretary of State for India as a "calamity", have not been able to move the London authorities to make the simple gesture demanded by Indian feeling and Indian opinion. And every effort made by and on behalf of them appeared to add to the complexities of the Indian situation. Indian and Britisher have deplored this sorry development. But none has been able to help retrieve the deplorable situation. As interviews and conversations between leaders of Indian political opinion and Lord Linlithgow increased in number, the further they appeared to recede from one another, Indian from Indian, Indian from Britisher. As we write this study we have chanced upon an article in the London *Fortnightly Review* of the month of April, 1940, in which the writer, Mr. Edward Thompson, presented a view of Indian developments that is informed by insight. He quoted "perhaps the most respected British official in India" as saying: 'I am convinced that we have lost a tremendous opportunity.' And his criticism of the course of "negotiations" between Lord Linlithgow and the "great variety of persons prominent in the political life of British India," was devastating: "The Viceroy, from time to time, holding fresh interviews, moved the problem on to the communal basis." This is a simplification of the deadlock between Hindus and Muslims that has been made much of by British administrators as one reason of their failing to respond to the demand put forth on behalf of the Indian National Congress. It seems to ignore Indian responsibility for the intensification of the communal bickerings in the country. In successive volumes of the *Indian Annual Register* since 1936 we have been dealing with and discussing the various forces, personal and impersonal, that have by their influence and activity, been intensifying the separatist tendencies in the country. The Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords referred on October 18 to "the root-cause of the difficulties in the domain of constitution building in India" which he traced back to the "communal antagonisms which still militate against the political unity of India." Sir Samuel Hoare in the House of Commons, speaking as the official spokesman on the debate raised on behalf of the Opposition, referred to "the difficulties in the way" which were not of the "making" of British administrators, of British policy. These difficulties were "inherent in the many divisions between the classes and the communities in the great sub-continent," said he. He threw the responsibility for their elimination on Indian shoulders, offering at the same time British "help" in this task. He cited the "Communal Award" as a concrete instance of the "help" rendered by the British Government "at great risk" to itself to the cause of Indian unity. But the divisions still existed, and until they were removed the British Government could not divest itself of its "responsibilities to the minorities".

And which were the minority interests that stood in the way of

the British Government declaring that India would, at the end of the present war, be endowed with all the attributes of a Free State in so far as it was possible for the British Government to help in the process? And who were the minorities that needed protection, that were afraid of the emergence of "democratic Swaraj" in India? In an article in *Harijan* entitled "The Fiction of Majority", appearing on the 16th October, 1939, Gandhiji catalogued them:

"And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Mussalmans (religious); Depressed Classes (social); Liberals (political); Princes (social); Brahmins (social); Non-Brahmins (social); Lingayats (social) Sikhs (social?); Christians—Protestant and Catholics—(religious); Jains (social?); Zemindars (Political?). I have a letter from the Secretary of the All-India Shia Conference registering their claim for separate existence.....I have drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum*."

This clarification of the majority and minority position in India ought to have showed the way to its solution. But it was Communal differences—raised by seekers after political power—not to be. And the reason of this failure was indicated with unerring precision by a daughter of India, Begum Hamid Ali, who as President of the annual conference of the Calcutta Constituency of the All-India Women's Conference said that the communal differences "have been deliberately raised up by those in power or those seeking power", by men and women "who refuse to see the good of the whole but can only see the good of a part". In this race and game of one-sidedness a section of our Muslim neighbours represented in the All-India Muslim League have for sometime past been playing a prominent part. We have discussed in previous volumes the birth and growth of a "separate conceit" in the Muslim community; we have analysed the psychological factors that stand in the way of our Muslim neighbours accepting the "territorial patriotism" that is one of the marks and notes of the modern man and woman. The resolutions of the Muslim League, the resolutions passed at meetings of Muslim organisations, the writings and speeches of Muslim publicists and public men, hold the mirror to the mind of the community which since it failed to supply rulers to India has been nursing in its life the idea of a separate existence whose norms and forms needed protection from non-Muslim influence.

This idea and ideal of a separate individuality for the Muslims to be consolidated in India as an island in the heart of India was repudiated in a way by the workings of history "weaving the warp of the principles and teachings of Islam across the woof of the original culture of Hindustan", to quote the words of the editor of the *Muslim Revival* (Lahore Quarterly, 1934). The occasion for this interpretation by a Muslim journalist was an article published in the pages of his paper by Baron Omar Reif Ehrenfels of Vienna, an Austrian convert to Islam. The title of his article was "Renaissance of Islam and the Culture of Hindustan."

Muslim separatism  
unsupported  
by history

In course of this article he said many things complimentary to Hindu habits of thought and life. As a result of his study of Hindu life during a tour through India in 1932-33, and living experience of Islamic life in this country he came to the conclusion that "there are fundamental resemblances subsisting between the actual life expressions of Hinduism and the original Arab Culture". He cited an instance of the similarity, that in the matter of dress, in the following words :

"It may be considered as an irony of fate that the Indian Muslims look down upon the Hindus as indecent simply because their men wear the *dhoti* and their women's dress consists of *choli* and *sarees*. It will not do for us to overlook the fact, however, that Arab men and women used to dress in the very same way at the time of the Prophet. It was only due to the influence of some Puritanic extremists and to the neighbour-hood of Byzantium that the veil system for Muslim ladies and the overloaded clothing for men became fashionable."

It is not in the externalities of life alone that there have been or were these resemblances. Scholars and historians have been collecting for us facts that prove that a synthesis had been worked out in India by Hindu and Muslim saints and sages on which was built up a social relation of sweetness and grace. The modern-educated Hindu and Muslim has no knowledge of the process of this reconciliation, no appreciation of the value of this friendship. And those who are curious about these things, of the action and reaction of cultures on one another, can suggest or find that the resemblance between Hindu and Muslim ideals and practices had a common breeding-ground in the culture and civilisation that have come to be known as Dravidian when the countries now known as Hindusthan and Misr (Egypt) and the intervening regions between them were bound each to each by a common culture the memories of which have faded from the minds of many generations. Not long ago to Hindu *Sannyasins* in India Mecca was a place of pilgrimage; the Black Stone of Kaaba was to them *Makkeswar Siva-Linga*. These traditions are unknown to the present generation of Hindus and Muslims in India who are being taught that they are separated by unbridgeable differences from one another in culture, in habits of life and thought.

Ignorance of this nature is partly responsible for the growth of that conflict and competition in politics of which the resolutions of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League quoted in a previous page are concrete manifestations. It has come to be widely believed that the opposition of the Muslim League to the demands of the Congress has something to do with the rigid attitude of the British Government; and this attitude is believed to have given to "the minority communities a virtual veto on future constitutional progress", to quote the words of the resolution of the National Liberal Federation passed at its annual session in December, 1939. The Muslim League also appear to be conscious of this exploit of theirs, as we find its Working Committee passing a resolution in October '33 at New Delhi, "appreciating" the repudiation by the British Government of "the unfounded opinion of the Congress that they alone represent all

Ignorance of  
this is the root  
of the evil



India". In the bitterness of controversy, in their anxiety to gain tactical advantages, the leaders of the Muslim League have been saying and doing things which can result in injury to the abiding interests of India where for good or for evil, in prosperity, in adversity, they have to live and work. As one watches these unhappy developments he can only fall back on the hopeless hope that things must grow worse before they can get better.

Apart from the conflict in the region of the "imponderables", in ideas and practices coloured by ideas, there are vast material objects for which the classes and groups in India have begun "Political Power" to carry on a running fight. The phrase—"political —the object of competition power"—represents these, the desire to utilise the power of the State for the advancement of particular economic interests. This fight for political power has been masquerading in the guise of concern for the protection of cultural and of socio-religious interests. The British Government have by its "Communal Award" helped to release from the sub-conscious region of community life the spirit of egoism that has learnt to exploit religion in the service of political ambitions. The experience of two years of the working of "provincial autonomy" appears to have taught the communalists among Muslim leaders that the separate electorates from which they had hoped so much have not protected their separate interests. Therefore have they begun to say that parliamentary government based on the counting of heads was "totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples" of India. They have realised the fact that the principle of separate electorates under a scheme of "arithmetical democracy" does not help them to secure entrance into the Ministries, the seat and centre of the power in the State. In the four provinces of India—the North-West Frontier Provinces, Sind, the Punjab, Bengal—they are a majority; by manipulation of voting qualification granted to them they have a majority of Muslim voters. But even in these provinces there had been different party groupings among the candidates who went to the Muslim votes with different election cries and slogans. So that in none of these provinces can it be said that separate electorates have been able to provide unified leadership to the Muslim community. In the North-West Frontier Provinces where the Muslims are 95 per cent of the population, a Congress-Coalition Ministry have held and exercised "power" during the greater part of the time that "provincial autonomy" has worked there. In Sind where the Muslims are about 60 per cent of the population, the leaders of the Muslim League have not with all their efforts been able to instal a ministry of League faithfuls. In the Punjab the Ministry is a Coalition, though the Premier, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, is one of the pillars of the Muslim League; but he even has not cared to declare that his Ministry is a League Ministry. In Bengal there is the same amount of uncertainty about the political affiliation of the Ministry, though the Premier, Moulvi Fasil Huj, and certain of his colleagues have done their best or their worst in embittering relations between the Hindus and Muslims of the province.

The realisation of the nature of separate electorates has not,

however, taught them to go in for general electorates which would have forced Hindu and Muslim candidates to go to the electors with non-communal cries and slogans, would have taught those candidates who got elected to the Legislatures to observe in public a certain decency in speech and conduct. Instead of realising the need for this desirable change communalist Muslim leaders have been suggesting that the logic of separate electorates required that the Ministries should be formed not on principles and programmes of political action but on a division of Cabinet seats according to the plan of electorates; they have been demanding that Muslim Ministers should have a separate existence in the Council of Ministers. This difficulty has followed the Muslim League in its attitude towards Federation. As far as human vision can go, the central authority of the State in India will be exercised by Ministers who will owe their seats in the Central Legislature to the votes of voters who under any scheme of electorate, separate or common, will, the majority of them, be Hindus. This is a prospect which is displeasing to Mr. Jinnah and his League.

Joint electorates and election fights on different programmes and politics would have minimised any incipient communalism in the heart of the Hindu community. But what the Muslim League have done during the last thirty months has poked this communalism in the heart of a section of the Hindu community which organised in the All-India Hindu Mahasabha has begun to talk of separate Hindu rights, and to organise for their defence. The talk of Pakistans in different parts, in the north-west and north-east, of Hindusthan, in the heart of the Deccan centering round the State of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, has created a fear in the hearts of the Hindus that these schemes and dreams would break up the unity of the country. This is a prospect that has driven the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha Movement to declare that in India the Hindus constituted the nation, the bedrock of the nation, and that the non-Hindus are and will remain as "equal citizens, enjoying equal protection and civil rights", to quote the words of Sri Vinayakrao Savarkar, the President of the last session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha during the last week of December, 1939. This Hindu communalism can yet be controlled or neutralised if the wise and far-sighted among Muslim leaders understand and appreciate the dangerous tendencies of the Muslim League movement. The Indian National Congress has been standing as a buffer between these rival organisations, absorbing much of the shock of attacks directed against each other by them. But the rising temper of Muslim communalism is a great temptation and an incentive to Hindu communalism. As a reply to Muslim separatism Hindu separatism has been raising its head and asserting itself. The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha have begun to say that the Indian National Congress in its pursuit of the will-o'-the-wisp of Muslim co-operation in the service of Indian Nationalism has been sacrificing Hindu interests, has been selling the passers to Muslim communalism. The organisation of the Khaksar movement

by Inayat Ullah Khan, popularly known as Allama Mashriqi—the sage or wise man of the East—this organisation of the physical force and strength of the Muslim community is having its re-action on the Hindu community which has begun to borrow their tactics, and to better them in the borrowing.

The Khaksar organisation was founded in 1930 or, as another version says, in 1932. For about seven years, during these years, the Khaki-clad, *belcha* (spade)-carrying groups of young Muslims marching through the streets in military formation did not attract much attention or excite public curiosity. But in 1939 they emerged

Founder of  
Khaksar  
organisation

into public view when they came forward to reconcile through the use of force the Shias and the Sunnis of Lucknow who had begun to quarrel among themselves about their rights to sing the *Madhe Saheba* and the *Tabarra*. The Government of the United Provinces prohibited their entrance into the province. This order the Khaksars defied; their leader—Allama Mashriqi—was arrested; he apologised and was let off. The first intervention of the Khaksars in public affairs was thus not much of a success. But as an expression, a new expression, of awakening among Muslims in India, it has a place in the history of this country. The founder of the movement is a modern-educated man who passed with distinction through the Punjab, the Cambridge and the Paris Universities. He was appointed (1919) to the Indian Education Service and was posted to Peshawar as Vice-Principal of the Islamia College. He was transferred to the Educational Secretariat of the Government of India where he was for about two years Under-Secretary of the Department. He resigned from Government service in 1920 as a protest against British policy directed against Turkey. Another version has it that he resigned in 1924. But there is no doubt that the Khilafat agitation in India and the *Hijrat* movement, which was one of its off-shoots, determined the future course of Inayat Ullah Khan's life. About this time he wrote the "Tazkira" which was a new commentary on the Quran and the way of life indicated in it for the followers of Islam. It showed that Inayat Ullah Khan had been seeking in the original inspiration of the life of the Prophet of Islam a way of pulling the Muslim peoples of the world out of the ruts, out of their present decay and degradation. This has brought him into conflict with the upholders of traditional life and thought among his community, the Moulvis and Moulanas; in his writings he has directed his attacks on them as mainly responsible for the weakness of Islam as one of the moulding forces of the modern world.

The movement is characterised by fanaticism as all reform movements are in their pioneering days. In the hectic days when men and women dream dreams, and see visions of a better life to be established on this earth of theirs by their own exertions, to build a new heaven in this old earth, they are apt to think, talk and act extravagantly. These need not be taken seriously or treated with needless rigidity by the upholders of law and order. But such enthusiasms and acts have a place in history as records of the

14 Points of  
the Khaksar  
Creed

particular social mind which for many reasons might have lost its balance. It is in this light that the historian should notice the 9th Point of the 14 Points of the creed of the Khaksar movement, issued by Allama Mashriqi from his head-quarters at Ichhra (a distance of seven to eight miles from Lahore), on the 15th of October, 1937 :

"The aim of the Khaksar soldier is to establish sovereignty over the whole world, and to secure social and political supremacy through their fine conduct".

In one of the pamphlets issued by him entitled *Islami Ki Askari Zindgi*—"Military Life in Islam"—he is found saying that the Quran

"had proclaimed in unequivocal words to the world that the Prophet was sent with the true religion and definite instructions that he should make all other religions subservient to this religion, regardless if the domination of the world caused affliction to the Kafirs.

These two quotations may appear to be inconsistent with the 7th and 8th Points of the Khaksar creed :

(7) "The Khaksar soldier stands for (a) regard for the religious and social sentiments of all communities, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Jew and untouchable, etc., (b) maintenance of their particular culture and customs,.....and believes this policy to be the secret of Muslim rule in India for a thousand years.

(8) "The Khaksar soldier considers it the first duty of his organisation to secure for every community its proper civic rights and to guard its internal and external interests.....

There is nothing peculiar in such inconsistency. The history of every religious movement, of every reform movement, is loaded with them. There cannot be any manner of doubt that when the founder of the Khaksar movement placed as the 1st Point of his creed "the establishment of an order that will be equal, non-communal and tolerant, yet non-subservient, by the crushing of all communal sentiments and religious prejudices of mankind by our good and serviceful conduct", he followed the traditions of the founders of religions, of the pioneers of new social ideals. From certain points of view he is in advance of his community, in opposition to it. But in practice he has failed as the others, his predecessors, have done. And he has sent into the world of India "a sword" and not peace. The name *Khaksar* bestowed by him on his organisation may mean—"earth-like"—"humble". One of the symbols of his organisation may be a *belcha*, a "spade", an humble enough but very necessary thing in the economy of human life, a symbol of labour and agriculture. But it was used by the Prophet of Islam at "the battle of Badr"; it is the same thing which the Nazis of Germany has popularized and the Khaksars have adopted from them. It was one of the proud items to record in Khaksar history that Inayat Ullah Khan came into touch with Herr Hitler when the latter was organising his party. The military organisation of the Khaksars, the avowedly military or war-like bent of their training, their near similarity to the Nazi technique of organisation, their ambition of world domination in which India could only act the part of a stepping-stone—all these have created an impression that the Khaksar movement will be an instrument in the hands of communalist Muslims.

We have drawn up the picture of a country where the rulers and

the ruled have failed to see eye with one another, where Muslims have failed to play their part in bringing a self-respecting life to their country. In the last volume of the *Annual Register* we described the progress of another fight between Indian and Indian, in the heart of the Indian National Congress where we saw an elected President of the organisation resigning his post of honour and responsibility. That step has not led to a return of peace to the Congress household. During the presidential election controversy the word "Rightists" came to be used to denote those who generally followed the lead given by Gandhiji. Their critics or opponents were claimed to be "Leftists"—Congress Socialists, Radical Congressmen, Kisan Sabhaites, Communists or supporters of a United Front, and an indeterminate group that followed or clustered round Sri Subhas Chandra Basu. The leader of the Congress Socialists may be said to be Pandit Narendra Dev of the United Provinces; of the Radical Congressmen Mr. M. N. Roy; of the Kisan Party Swami Sahajananda Saraswati; of the United Front people there is no outstanding figure who could be said to dominate the scene. Dissatisfaction with the Gandhian leadership had combined these groups to give battle to the "Rightists" on the occasion of the presidential election of the Congress. But their success in defeating Gandhiji's own nominee—Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramiyya—appeared to have exhausted the possibilities of their cohesion. And what they gained in January, 1939, they lost in March, 1939, when it was broken up at Tripuri, because the Congress Socialists got afraid of the responsibility for dislodging the leadership of Gandhiji. Thereafter the attempt of Sri Subhas Chandra Basu to consolidate the "Leftists" under a new organisation called the *Forward Bloc* has not been much of a success. One by one all except the Kisan-Sabhaites have stepped out of the *Bloc*, which started in the first week of May 1939, has been able to function only through the drive of its founder. In the last week of June 1939, the All-India Congress Committee passed certain resolutions which have precipitated a new cause of controversy and intensified the old. One of these put a ban on individual Congressman offering or organising "any form of *Satyagraha* in the administrative provinces of India without the previous sanction of the Provincial Congress Committee concerned." The other resolution asked Provincial Congress Committees not to "interfere with the discretion of the Ministries" concerned; it was, however, left open to "the Executive of the Provincial Congress Committee to draw the attention of the Government privately to any particular abuse or difficulty"; if there was any difference between the Ministry and the Provincial Congress Committee "in matters of policy" reference was to be made to the parliamentary Sub-Committee; "public discussion in such matters should be avoided".

These resolutions were passed in the teeth of the opposition led by Sri Subhas Chandra Basu and Swami Sahajananda Saraswati. As a protest against the restrictive tendency of Congress leadership, as an assertion of the freedom of Congressmen, Sri Subhas Chandra Basu on behalf of the "Left Consolidation Committee" called upon the country to observe an "All-India Day" on the 9th of July, 1939.

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Under his direction or inspiration the Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee of which he was President passed a resolution deploring the two resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee. Babu Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, had asked Subhas Babu "to promote discipline in the Congress by cancelling the proposed meetings". But the latter pleaded inability to do so, and expressed "surprise" that the Congress President should have objected to "our constitutional and democratic right to protest against these resolutions and mobilize Congress opinion." The demonstration was held. The Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee could not, however, condone this "indiscipline" in the conduct of a President of a Provincial Congress Committee, and at a meeting held at Wardha from August 9 to August 12, it passed a resolution declaring Sri Subhas Chandra Basu "disqualified" to hold the position of President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and "to be a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years as from August, 1939." Though the public was prepared for some such drastic step in the name of "discipline", the general body of it felt that Subhas Babu had the best of the argument in this particular controversy. And they were confirmed in their opinion when they found Gandhiji writing in the columns of *Harijan* on September 9 that

"Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose has a perfect right to agitate against the action of the Working Committee, and canvass public opinion against it."

The controversy that had started in January, 1939, with Subhas Babu's election as President of the Congress for two consecutive terms reached here a stage which appears to be irrelevant to the problem of India's political destiny. It is difficult to trace the successive steps to any rational philosophy of action in the controversy. To the generality of us the thing appears to be the expression of a general uneasiness created by mal-adjustment at home and wars abroad. The leaders of the "Leftists" love to declare that their activities are the products of a historic necessity. As Sri Rajkumar Singha, Propaganda Secretary of the United Provinces *Forward Bloc*, said: "It will not do to interpret the *Forward Bloc* concept as anything else than the outward manifestation of a vast amount of restlessness against the muddled state of things." To the watchful public the activities represented by the "Left Consolidation Committee" do not appear to be anything better or more coherent than this, a proof of which was the quick break-up of the "Left Consolidation Committee" into its component units. The causes of the break-up have been sought to be explained by a spate of words that does not carry conviction to the public. The dialectics of discipline and democracy, of individual conscience, have not also taken the people far. During the Presidential Election controversy Sri Subhas Chandra Basu had cast certain "aspersions" on the "Rightist" leaders for their supposed anxiety for a "compromise with British Imperialism" on the question of Federation. But the resignation of the Congress Ministries, and the unending agreement between Gandhiji and Lord Linlithgow, have shown that the leaders of the Congress were not as accommodating as they were represented to be. It has been claimed that it is this pressure of the "Leftists" that has kept the "Rightists"

straight. To the detached observer it appeared that these internecine quarrels were reflections of a social mind which, subjected to various degrees of absolutism, having had experience of more than enough government repression in the name of law and order, was thinking more about liberties than about discipline, was hankering more after a spell of complete freedom from all restraints than for the needs of associated work, of a united front. The mild discipline that Gandhiji has been prescribing for his people appears to have had no influence on their life and conduct. Those of our countrymen who talk of the Fascist mentality of the Congress "High Command"—what will they say of the "next phase in world-history" which Sri Subhas Chandra Basu foresees—a "synthesis of Communism and Fascism?" Both these "isms" have their peculiar disciplines which are not as mild as the Gandhian.

This picture of a divided house in politics is to be met with in the field of industry in India where Labour and Capital appear to have learnt no lesson from the experience of the countries which have been pioneers in the industrialism of the modern world. Symptoms of a maladjustment are manifest all over the country, of which the Labour strikes and and lock-outs or lock-outs and strikes at Jamshedpur and at Digboi are outstanding facts during the period under discussion in this study. In both the places local officialdom were found incapable of controlling the situation except by resort to drastic methods, methods in which rifles, revolvers and regulation *lathis* were called upon to restore "peaceful" conditions of life. The Ministries of Bihar and Assam appointed Enquiry Committees which went into the causes and remedies of the disease. The former appointed Babu Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as arbitrators in the dispute between the Management of the Tata Iron and Steel Company and the Tata Workers' Union. Their "award", which may be said to represent the mind of the Congress Executive in matters that concerned relations between Labour and Capital in India, was an attempt to hold the balance even; it spoke of "moderation", of "discipline", of the mutual interests of capitalists and labourers in this opening stage of vast industrial developments in the country. In Assam the report of Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji, an ex-Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, held the leadership of Labour as responsible for the unhappy happenings in the oil mines and coal fields of Margherita and Digboi. Both these reports became subjects of controversy not because they gave expression to ideas or suggested reform that were objectionable in themselves, but because the controversialists were divided by immense ranges of thought and ideals. All are agreed that conditions of rural and industrial life needed change, change that would secure to Labour a self-respecting life and to Capital certain profits, a minimum of profits. But disagreement emerges when on behalf of Labour it is claimed that no private interests other than theirs should have any voice in the concerns; the claims of Capital were not so blatantly put; men who spoke on their behalf were increasingly aware of the time-spirit which has begun to speak on the material needs of Labour, on their spiritual needs in a world where science has shown that these could be made available with-

out stint to every man, woman and child. To Socialists or Communists who dream of the State dictating every thought and activity of the citizens, this standpoint makes no appeal.

But since the declaration of war in Europe in September last this controversy has almost been hushed both by the enforcement of

the Defence of India regulations and by the

**Rise of  
Totalitarianism** sense of the community. Restrictions have been placed on the liberty of expression of opinion, of action which the instinct and not the reason of the community regard as necessary for the preservation of the rudiments of social life. Therefore we find the curious development that society itself has been feeling its way towards increasing intervention of the Government, of the State, towards toleration of regulation by the State of the life and thought of the community. Accepted as war-time measures during the last Great War, the social mind has been trained to accept the present restrictions with less resentment. For, it has come to be recognised that in modern wars the whole of the forces and resources of a nation or nations, their material and moral forces and resources, must be organised and thrown into the hazard of war, if victory was to be attained or defeat avoided. Historians have told us that this recognition first dawned on the minds of the people in Europe when in self-defence Revolutionary France met the challenge of the whole of Europe with the passion and the idealism of her whole people organised and directed by the genius of Carnot and Napoleon. Since then the experiences of the wars waged by Germany have taught the peoples the logic of the "absolute war" or "totalitarian war." Marshal Foch, the man who represented the victory of the Allied and Associated Powers during the last World War, in tracing the causes of the defeat of France by Germany in 1870, said: "To a people in arms, organised for conquest, invasion, a fight to a finish", France had opposed an army that was not drawn from the whole people, and fought with an idea of war based on limited or "diplomatic" objects. Fascist or Nazi ideologies by their appeal to the egotism of the memories of Imperial Rome, of Imperial Germany, and Bolshevik Russia by its Messianic fervour for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the dispossessed and the disinherited of the centuries of human history, have been working out the logic of this development in the modern world.

Thus both for purposes of war and peace nations are being organised on a "totalitarian" basis. And the individual liberty which has been the gift to humanity of the 19th century

**Sacrifice of the  
individual** has become the first casualty in the 20th century of what appears to be a natural evolution. We in India cannot expect to escape the process of this development, the consequences of this world-wide process. Unfree as we are, or free as we hope to be, the battle over these ideas and practices has already begun in our minds. The next few years will be full of alarms and excursions in the mental and material worlds of our existence. We have been living in one of the crises of history when the minds of men are disturbed and peace departs from the world. (*Specially contributed by Sri Suresh Chandra Dev*).



Proceedings of

**The Council of State**

**The Central Legislative Assembly**

**AND**

**Provincial Councils**

**AND**

**Assemblies**

***JULY—DECEMBER 1939***



# The Council of State

Autumn Session—Simla—12th. Sept. to 27th. Sept 1939

## SYMPATHY TO POLAND

The Autumn Session of the Council of State commenced at Simla on the 12th September 1939. Sir *Manekjee Dadabhoj* presided, Sir *Jagdish Prasad*, Leader of the House, at the outset, moved the following resolution :

"That the House do send to Poland an unanimous expression of its profound admiration at their heroic struggle against wanton German aggression and its complete confidence that the undaunted spirit of the people and the unflinching determination of their allies will ultimately lead them to victory."

The resolution was supported by Rai Bahadur *Lala Ramsaranadas*, Mr. *P. N. Sapru*, Mr. *Hossain Imam*, Mr. *Shantisdas Askuran*, Raja *Charanjit Singh*, Sir *Mahomed Yakub*, Sir *A. P. Patro*, Mr. *Richardson*, Pandit *Hirday Nath Kunsru*, Mr. *Kahkar*, Kumar *N. N. Sinha*, Col. Sir *Hussam-ud-Din* and Mr. *Mahomed Hussain*.

After giving an account of how the war had been forced upon England and France despite every effort made by them to avoid it, Sir *Jagdish Prasad* said : 'We could make no greater contribution to the preservation of civilised existence than throw our whole weight into the struggle. There are some who have doubts and misgivings and who ask, 'is our help to be unconditional ? Should we not take advantage of the struggle to obtain further political privileges for our people ?' I hope the hon. members will bear with me for a moment if I place before them my own view as an Indian on this issue. Let us not ignore the psychological effect on the people of England. How will the British people, engaged in a life-and-death struggle over an issue on which we fully agree, regard our action if we make our help conditional on the completion of a political bargain ? Will there not be certain lowering of the moral values, certain estrangement of the spirit between us and those with whom we bargain in such cruel circumstances. Considering the great human and moral issues over which this struggle is being waged it seems to me that it will be in keeping with our spiritual tradition, that it will be in harmony with the "highest teachings of our saints and philosophers if we perform our obvious duty without a thought of reward for it. We will fight for the right because it is right and with that motive alone. But coming down to lower plane, the commercial plane, if I may call it the plane of bargain—profit and loss—are we sure that insistence on bargain at the present moment will ultimately be to our advantage ? Let us not forget that there are not merely two parties in this bargain, India and Britain ; there are more parties than one in India with conflicting claims. The settlement of terms may soon degenerate into a wrangle, paralysing effort and filling the atmosphere with domestic strife. There is in all conscience enough discord in the country. Let us beware lest in an untimely attempt at political settlement we lose the soul and body together. A united war effort will be the best solvent of our internal differences.

*Lala Ramsaranadas* said that they had the greatest admiration for Poland. He hoped that with the help of the Allies not only would Poland be saved but all smaller nations would feel safer in future. In this connection *Lala Ramsaranadas* claimed that a self-governing India would be the biggest asset of the British Empire and hoped that Great Britain would not hesitate to discharge her duty by India. Mr. *P. N. Sapru* welcomed the resolution as it would enable the Council to discuss foreign affairs in future. (The *Chair* : I will not allow you to do that.) Mr. *Sapru* said that the issue before mankind was whether there was going to be the rule of the law in the world. He hoped that Mr. Chamberlain would be firm in future, not only in freeing the Poles but also the German people from the bondage of Nazism. Mr. *Sapru*, however, explained that genuine co-operation could only come when causes of the present distrust and discontent were removed in this country. Britain could not fight for Polish freedom and yet deny the same to India. Mr. *Beaconsfield* agreed, supporting the resolution, said that India could not continue to have a sham constitution under which minorities were oppressed and crushed. He hoped that with the dawn of the era of liberty in Europe, these

would also be real freedom in India. Pandit H. N. Kunzru said that India's sympathy must be on the side of those who were fighting autocracy and Nazism. "There is notwithstanding our differences with Britain," he added. In expressing sympathy with Poland they were morally binding themselves to help Great Britain. Mr. Kunzru stressed that for proper prosecution of the war it was essential that there should be complete co-operation between the authorities and non-officials. This co-operation could only come about if India was made to feel that her status was in no way inferior to that of any self-governing Dominion. This would require a reconstitution of the Central Government and re-shaping of its policy, particularly in Defence matters. The present policy did not create trust or confidence in the British intentions towards India. This policy was resolutely racial and anti-Indian. "I speak without bitterness but in the hope that the Government will realise the gravity of the situation and create the necessary atmosphere for perfect trust between the authorities and the public". Pandit Kunzru also referred to the case of Indians abroad and said that many a time opposition to India's just claims had come not only from the Governments of Dominions but also from His Majesty's Government itself. "For the successful prosecution of the war, it is necessary to have complete unity between all the parties concerned. I hope both the Governments in India and London will change their angle of vision and make India a free partner in the British Commonwealth. The principles for which we are fighting in Europe must be made applicable to this country also". Mr. Kalikar asserted that no party in India was out to bargain with Britain. He, however, hoped that Britain would redeem her pledges to India. The *Chair*, in putting the resolution to vote, said that the time for words had passed and they must act now. "Much depends on you. You can go back to your constituencies and guide and advise them on the right lines. You will be judged by your action", he said. The resolution was adopted, all members standing. The House then adjourned till the 18th.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS PASSED

18th. SEPTEMBER :—The Council passed without amendment seven Bills recently passed by the Assembly. They were the *Census Bill*, the *Bill to amend the Indian Salt Act*, the *Bill to amend the Code of Civil Procedure*, the *Bill to amend the Indian Tea Cess Act*, the *Medical Diplomas Bill*, the *Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act* and the *Bill to amend the Law of Evidence* with respect to certain commercial documents. During the discussion on the Census Bill, the Home Secretary, Mr. Conran Smith, explained that they were proceeding with the measure on the assumption that the work of taking the census could be undertaken and continued in spite of the war.

#### PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE COMM. REPORT

Sir Guthrie Russell, Chief Commissioner for Railways, moved that the report of the Pacific Locomotive Committee be taken into consideration. He first paid a tribute to the members of the Committee and said: "I have little doubt that their recommendations will go a very long way towards the solution of our particular problems in India. I may say that such experiments as we have already carried out lead us to hope that the alteration to the locomotives which have been recommended by the Committee will be the final solution. I would point out, however, that the Committee themselves sound a note of warning and emphasise that until recommendations have been proved to be correct by extensive experiments, there should be no relaxation of the present speed restrictions imposed on Pacific locomotives in India, and this will be our policy". Sir Guthrie explained the main problems with which the authorities were faced when they purchased the locomotives and pointed out that if the requirements then were to be met there was no course open but to adopt the Pacific type of locomotives. Bulk purchases had to be resorted to or a design which was considered obsolete had to be perpetuated and it had to be remembered that the life of a locomotive was from thirty-five to forty years. Complete trial would have taken from five to six years. Further delay in putting these locomotives into service would have delayed the use of low grade fuel with its effect on railway revenues. Even trial with the knowledge we then had would probably not have eradicated all our troubles. Sir Guthrie gave examples of the financial savings effected on one of the services—savings which had paid for the locomotives employed at least two or three times over. Concluding, Sir Guthrie said if the war was prolonged, the same situation might arise as did in the Great War when the resources of the Railways of India were taxed to their utmost. It might be necessary to curtail our passenger

services as our capacity might be occupied by the carriage of goods in which case it might be necessary to divert at least the XO and XB locomotives from passenger to fast goods traffic for which they were eminently suitable. So what the Pacific Locomotive Committee had described as an error of judgment might end by helping to solve our difficulties in the near future.

Messrs. *Kunzru*, *Hossain Imam*, *Sapru* and *Lala Ramsaran Das* severely criticised the policy of the Railway Board in launching on extensive purchases of Pacific type of engines without proper trial and without properly consulting their consulting engineers. *Lala Ramsaran Das* wanted to know whether the economies claimed in coal cost was due to the Pacific type of engines or to the fall in prices. He also wanted to know what commission the consulting engineers were given. In this connection Mr. *Hossain Imam* held that in calculating the saving on account of the Pacific type of engines, they must take into account the cost of strengthening the bridges and overhauling the track which had been necessitated by the new type of engines. He urged that the best thing the Railway Board could do was to admit its mistake. The speakers were very anxious for the future and urged rapid Indianisation of the higher posts, extension of research and manufacture of locomotives in India. They laid particular stress on the recommendation that all cases of accidents should be enquired into by an inspector unconnected with the Railway Board. Mr. *Parker* wanted to know whether the Railway Board had kept in touch with the British Railway which had been using the Pacific type of engines. Sir *Guthrie Russell*, replying to the debate, explained that the consulting engineers were paid a retainer but no commission was paid on the purchase of Pacific engines. He assured the House that it had the full sympathy of the Government in regard to Indianisation of the services and in making India self-supporting. The question of having an independent authority to enquire into railway accidents was under the Government's consideration though, he said, he personally agreed with the recommendation of the Committee. Referring to Mr. *Parker*, Sir *Guthrie* said that the Railway Board was in constant touch with the railways not only in the United Kingdom but also in France and Germany. He stated that Pacific locomotives was one of the factors in the reduction of coal costs.

#### DEBATE ON THE CHATFIELD REPORT

At this stage *Pandit H. N. Kunzru* moved the adjournment of the Council, to discuss the Chatfield Report and the decisions of the British Government thereon. He mostly dwelt on the constitutional aspect of the question. He said that so far they were told that the Army in India was kept at minimum strength required for the country. It was for the first time that the British Government had admitted that at least one-tenth of India's army could be employed outside India. He asked whether India alone was interested in the defence of Suez and Singapore. What about Australia and New Zealand, he enquired. *Pandit Kunzru* said that the Government of India Act and the Joint Parliamentary Committee were clear that no part of Indian troops could be employed outside India but were to be maintained for the defence of India. To get out of this legal difficulty, they had laid down that the frontiers of India had been extended to Middle and Far East. He did not know where this process of extending the frontiers would end, and the contributions made by His Majesty's Government gave no right to the British Government to use Indian forces in the way they were being used. Alluding to the Chatfield recommendation for increased manufacture of armaments in India the speaker enquired whether the Government would make India self-supporting in all kinds of armaments and whether aeroplanes would also be manufactured in India. Mr. *Kaiker* supported the motion. He regretted that before extending India's frontiers, Indian opinion had not been consulted at all and the United Kingdom had no moral or equitable right to impose an additional burden on the Indian tax-payer. He alleged that the principal benefit of the gift of forty-four crores would accrue to British manufacturers. Mr. *Hossain Imam* would neither support the motion nor the Government. He doubted the legality of His Majesty's Government moving troops out of India without necessary legislation by the British Parliament. For he was confident that under the existing law Indian troops could not be employed out of India at India's expense. Mr. *P. N. Sapru* feared that the Chatfield Committee had dealt the death blow to India's claim for Dominion Status and with dyarchical control of the Indian army they could never have Dominion Status within the meaning of the Statute of Westminster. "If my

reading is correct, then you are not true to the pledges given to India regarding Dominion Status". Mr. *Ogilvie*, Defence Secretary, replying to the debate, said that most of the discussion was outside the purview of the adjournment motion. While as far as the constitutional or political aspect was concerned it was no concern of the Government of India the British Government or the Chatfield Committee. Similarly, Indianisation did not fall within the terms of reference of the Chatfield Committee. The Defence Secretary was satisfied that most of the members of the Council and a larger number outside were satisfied with the decision of His Majesty's Government. "I have hardly seen a decision of the Government so favourably received as this one. He was sure that India within or without the Empire could not tolerate enemies prowling in the Middle and Far East. Referring to the demand for the manufacture of armaments in India, Mr. *Ogilvie* said that the machinery for most of the armaments was "phenomenally expensive". Similarly India to-day was unable even to manufacture motor cars. He, however, assured the Council that all possible industrial activities would be encouraged by the Government. Proceeding, Mr. *Ogilvie* pointed out that there had been no increase in India's military budget during recent years. According to His Majesty's Government's decision, only one-tenth of her army could be used for the external defence of India. His Majesty's Government would pay if Indian troops abroad exceeded that limit at any time. In conclusion, he said that India had done extremely well in the deal and had gained in every way. The motion was lost without a division and the Council adjourned till Sep. 20.

#### MANUFACTURE OF LOCOMOTIVES IN INDIA

**20th. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council of State discussed two non-official resolutions today, one of which relating to the manufacture of locomotives in India was adopted in an amended form, while the other in regard to the demand for Indianisation of the Indian Medical Service was rejected by 22 votes to six.

Mr. *V. V. Kalikar* moved a resolution that early steps be taken for the manufacture of locomotives in India. Messrs. *P. N. Sapru*, *Lala Ram Saran Das* and *Hriday Nath Kunzru* supported the resolution. Sir *Guthrie Russel*, Chief Commissioner of Railways, could not accept the resolution as it stood as it categorically committed the Government to a certain line of action. The Government could not commit themselves without first examining the financial aspect of the question. The whole question was now being examined by a committee whose report he undertook to place before the House the same as it would be available some time in January next. The Chief Commissioner said that there was perfect agreement in both sides of the House regarding the desirability to manufacture locomotives in India. The Government's latest plan was to design and equip one of the existing railway workshops for the manufacture of say 50 locomotives every year. Sir *Guthrie* moved an amendment urging the Railway Boards to take early steps to carry out a thorough investigation of the possibilities of locomotive manufacture in this country and to make a report. The council adopted the amendment.

#### INDIANISATIONS OF I. M. S.

*Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru* moved a resolution recommending to the Governor-General-in-Council to take immediate steps to Indianise the Indian Medical Service. Mr. *Kunzru* was supported by *Lala Ram Saran Das*, *Sayed Hossein Imam* and Mr. *P. N. Sapru*. The resolution was opposed by *Col. Hind* who said the Government had been sincere in its desire to Indianise the services as quickly and completely as possible. He said the proportions of Indians in the military employ would necessarily rise rapidly during the war and already there was a rise. *Col. Hind* concluding said the proposal was under consideration at present for suspension of recruitment of British officers in permanent commissions of the I. M. S. during the time of the present emergency. Sir *Jagdish Prasad* asserted that there was no racial discrimination in the Indian Medical Service. He explained that there was nothing wrong in the system of nomination during the time and that it was not possible to make further changes in the composition of the service. They must wait till the war was over when the question would be examined afresh. The Council divided and the resolution was defeated. The Council then adjourned till the 22nd.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS PASSED

**22nd. SEPTEMBER :—**The Council of State held a brief sitting, when official Bills passed by the Assembly were passed without any amendment. Three of these were amending Bills to the Indian Carriage by Air Act, the Indian Rubber Control

*Act and the Indian Railways Act. The fourth was a Bill to amend certain enactments and to repeal certain other enactments.*

#### DISCRIMINATION IN MILITARY HOSPITALS

The Council also discussed a non-official resolution, moved by Mr. F. V. *Kaliskar*, who urged the discontinuance of the system of maintaining separate hospitals for British and Indian Troops in Military Stations in India. Mr. *Kaliskar* alleged that the maintenance of separate hospitals for the British and the Indian element of the Indian Army was based on racial grounds and therefore, was unjustifiable. There were common messes for British and Indian Officers in the Army and he saw no reason why a similar system should not be adopted for the military hospitals. He also anticipated that his proposal would lead to considerable economies in expenditure. Lastly, he stated that British Military Hospitals were in the charge of R. A. M. C. Officers, who were not under the control of the Government of India, but of the War Office, and that branch of service was not open to Indians. Mr. *DeC. Williams*, Secretary, Defence Co-ordination Department, said that the Government had already accepted the principle underlying the resolution. He quoted a statement of the Commander-in-Chief made in the Council of State some times ago, in the course of which he had announced the acceptance of the principle and had stated that the Government had already amalgamated about a dozen hospitals. In 25 other and smaller hospitals, patients were treated in the Indian or British wing of the hospitals as the case may be. Mr. *Williams* said that that policy had continued and had been put into practice as and when funds became available. If there had not been complete amalgamation so far, it was because it was not economical to scrap British hospitals and extend Indian hospitals wherever both existed side by side. Secondly, in very large military stations, Government had to provide nucleus for emergencies such as war. He assured the Council that there were no racial considerations as had been made out by the mover. He regretted that the Government could not accept the resolution as it stood. *Pandit Kunzru*, intervening in the debate, urged equality of treatment given to British and Indian Troops in the hospitals in the matter of rations, beddings and other medical facilities. Mr. *Williams* regretted that the suggestion did not come within the purview of the resolution and he, therefore, could not accept it. The resolution was withdrawn and the Council adjourned till the 25th.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA BILL

25th. to 27th. SEPTEMBER :—The Council of State discussed the Defence of India Bill on the 25th. as passed by the Assembly. Mr. *Williams*, Secretary, Defence Co-ordination, moving that the Bill be taken into consideration, said that the present war was to defeat totalitarian methods and the most drastic delegation of powers was necessary. *Pandit H. N. Kunzru* delivered a strong attack on the Bill. He said that the members realised that the house was meeting in an atmosphere of unreality. The Government knew fully that anything they wanted could be easily carried here and the Government spokesman had with brutal frankness declared that the Government had gone to the utmost length in making concessions in the select committee and the Assembly and that no more changes could be made here. Mr. *Williams* had referred to the difference between the position of Government of India and the British Government. That difference went into the root of the matter. Had the Government of India been a responsible Government we should have invested it with larger powers. The Government had given evidence of the irresponsible character in the way they had used European young men from leaving India. The intention was to give them training as officers in the Indian Army not because they were trained but generally suitable. Were there not Indians suitable? These European youths were going to be obstacles in the way of qualified youths. The question of appointing Indians in higher ranks had been important but when the time came Europeans were being preferred. Referring to the provisions in the Bill Mr. *Kunzru* asked the Government to certify the important omission and announce that the interests of labour would be protected. He demanded that the right of appeal should be extended to all classes in which the special tribunals were not unanimous. Sir A. P. *Patel* supporting the bill refuted the allegations of Mr. *Kunzru* that the Government commanded majority in the Council. He said that the fault lay with the elected members who neither combined themselves nor attended the Council. He stressed the necessity for the Bill in view of the Nazi propaganda in this country. He warned the central Government

to take the greatest care of entrusting power to the provincial Governments who had shown 'utter lack of responsibility' since the inauguration of provincial autonomy. Mr. V. V. Kulkar and Mr. P. N. Saprú regretted that the Bill took away the powers of High Courts which in the past had safeguarded the rights of individuals against the misuse of power by provincial Governments. He wanted to know if the provincial Governments were consulted before the Bill was brought for enactment. Mr. Saprú referred to the speech of Sir A. P. Patil and said that his experience was that there was intense anti-Nazi feeling amongst students in this country. He regretted that in fighting the totalitarian countries totalitarian methods were adopted in this country as was evident from the provisions in this Bill. He said that the constitution of tribunals would not inspire confidence among the people. The whole-hearted cooperation of the people was wanted in the prosecution of the war which was the aim of the Bill. No provision of the bill would fit in with the psychological and mental make-up of the people of the country. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, replying to the criticism, reminded the house that Sir Zafrullah Khan was in charge of the war supply board. It functioned under the defence of the council of four members two of whom were Indians. The war supply board did not carry out large executive functions. It was working with close cooperation with the departments in which Indians were largely represented. He had no doubt that the Government wanted the utmost cooperation of all the interests concerned. He assured the house that he and his department would deal with the most sympathetic manner to obtain the cooperation from labour unions' leaders. He did not feel with the members who suggested that the provincial Governments who were responsible would not be as reliable as the irresponsible central legislature although that argument suited to him. Irresponsible Governments in these times tried to adjust themselves to the public opinion. Mr. Hossain Imam said that the rules under the Bill should be approved by the party leaders and central leaders and the Governments should accept the suggestions for their improvements. Secondly, he urged the Government to lay on the table of the legislature the prosecutions under the Bill. Mr. Imam criticised the provincial Governments for alleged prosecutions against political opponents and paid a tribute to the leader of the Assembly who imbibed the Gandhian philosophy. The House then adjourned till the next day the 26th. September when R. B. Lala Ramaswandas, deprecated the attacks made by certain members on Provincial Governments and declared that they should all stand by these Governments in the emergency. He criticised what he described as the Government of India's policy of racial discrimination exemplified in the special treatment of Anglo-Indians at a time when the Government required the fullest co-operation of the people of the land. Mr. A. DeC Williams, Secretary of the Defence Co-ordination Department, replying to the debate, said that the atmosphere in which the debate opened was not one in which one could convince oneself that the Council was meeting at a time of emergency. The debate might, to an onlooker, have appeared like one on the second reading of the Finance Bill. Replying to the criticisms of the order restraining the departure from India of Europeans between certain ages, he said that in this emergency, India required all available manpower, European and Indian, not only for fighting but for running the industries and all that was intended by the order was to prevent the depletion of that manpower. There was no sinister intention as was suggested and no idea of interfering with the Indianisation of the Army. Provincial Governments, Mr. Williams added, were consulted about the provisions of the Bill which were sent to them in draft and their comments were received from time to time. Some members, interrupting, asked for an indication of the nature of the Provincial Governments and whether these Governments had agreed to the provision of the Bill. Mr. Williams said the consultations were confidential. As regards the question whether the Government would consult party leaders on the rules under the Bill, Mr. Williams said he was not able to give an undertaking but the Government would consider the question. The House passed the first reading of the Bill and adjourned till the next day, the 27th. September, when an important assurance regarding the constitution of Special Tribunals under the Defence of India Bill was given by Mr. DeC Williams. The assurance was given in response to speeches on Mr. Saprú's amendment asking for the deletion of the provision for the appointment to the Tribunals of Chief Presidency or Additional Chief Presidency Magistrates. Mr. Saprú, who was supported by Mr. Mohammed Hussain, Pandit Kunsru and Padeshah, contended that the presence of a Magistrate on the Tribunals would not inspire confidence in the accused that he was getting a fair trial. Replying to the argument that acceptance of an amendment at this stage would necessitate reference back to the



Assembly and delay the Bill till the next session. *Pandit Kunzru* said that the mover would be satisfied if the Government expressed their sympathy with the amendment and undertook to ask Provincial Governments to see that at least two members of the Tribunals were men with judicial experience. *Sir David Devadas* and *Sir A. P. Patro* vigorously refuted the reflections on Magistrates and declared that Chief Presidency Magistrates had in many cases been appointed High Court Judges. *Mr. Hossain Inam* drew attention to the fact that Chief Presidency Magistrates existed only in three provinces and that only in the presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, while as for District and Additional District Magistrates, it was not incumbent on Provincial Governments to appoint them to the Tribunals. *Mr. DeC Williams* thought that the debate had constituted an indictment as much of the ordinary law which conferred jurisdiction on Magistrates as of this emergency Bill. He regretted the consistent and prolonged attack on magistracy which he was convinced was dispensing substantial justice. Referring to the amendment, *Mr. Williams* drew attention to the alteration made in the Assembly in the commencement clause so to provide for the bringing into force of the different provisions of the Bill as and when necessary. He could straightaway say that it was not the intention of the Central Government to bring the chapter relating to Special Tribunals into force until it was definitely called for and then only in areas in which it was called for (hear, hear). The Central Government, he added, were prepared to address Provincial Governments and suggest to them that as far as possible all members of the Special Tribunals should be either qualified for High Court Judgeships or be Judges. The amendment was withdrawn.

During the third reading of the Bill *Mr. Sapru* said that for the successful prosecution of the war unity was essential, for a disunited India could not effectively help the Empire. And to have the co-operation and goodwill of the people of India, it was necessary that a provisional government with the widest possible popular support should be set up. *Pandit Kunzru* referred to *Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar's* remarks on the first reading of the Bill in defence of the composition of the War Supply Board. *Sir Ramaswami* had urged that the Board was under an Indian Member and functioned under the Defence Council of four members, of whom two were Indians. If, said the *Pandit*, that defence was valid, then we should be debarred from asking for Indianisation at all. It was only natural that the Government did come in contact with Indians at several stages, but was that sufficient? Further, *Sir Ramaswami* seemed to argue that it was an advantage to have an irresponsible government at the Centre, because in his experience it was anxious to attune itself to popular opinion. It was well known, said the *Pandit*, that the Viceroy was trying earnestly to find out some means of removing the suspicion that existed in the country and create an atmosphere in which full co-operation could be secured in the present emergency. If His Excellency were to turn to *Sir Ramaswami* for advice, would he say to him that it was an advantage to India to have an irresponsible Central Government? (*Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar* interrupting: "My hon. friend is not doing justice to himself apart from doing justice to me, because it was my hon. friend who did not feel quite happy about Responsible Governments in the provinces. I think, my whole speech was a protest against that attitude; and, incidentally, I said that in the present circumstances, when you are accusing the Government of India of being irresponsible, I can only say from my experience that its very irresponsibility is casting an additional burden on it". He denied that he entered a plea for an irresponsible Government either in the Centre or anywhere else.) *Pandit Kunzru* said that he was glad to know that *Sir Ramaswami* did not intend to give the impression that his words seemed to convey. As regards Provincial Governments, the *Pandit* said, criticisms made by the members in the House should not be taken in a tragic spirit. The controversies between the people and the Provincial Governments need not alarm any one. *Mr. Williams*, Defence Secretary, said that the last thing that the Central Government wished to do was to interfere with the freedom and discretion of the Provincial Governments. Though the Central Government had, under the recent war time amendment of the Constitution Act, the power to give directions, yet if whatever was desired could be secured by the process of advice, the Central Government would tender that advice.

The Bill was passed, as also seven other official Bills. A resolution amending the *Read Resolution* as passed by the Assembly was next carried. The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

# The Indian Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Simla—30th. August to 22nd. Sept. 1939

## PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The autumn session of the Central Assembly commenced at Simla on the 30th. August 1939 with Sir *Abdur Rahim* in the chair. Barely a dozen persons sat in the galleries. The Congress members being absent, their benches were occupied by the members of the Muslim League party. Questions lasted 15 minutes, after which Sir *Andrew Clow*, Communication Member, moved that the report of the Pacific Locomotive Committee be taken into consideration. Sir Andrew paid a tribute to the committee for their work. Dealing with the past, he said that four main questions arose relating to (1) the policy of standardisation, (2) choice of the pacific type, (3) design of locomotives, and (4) placing of orders before engines were tied out. There was no doubt that standardisation was a sound step and if India embarked on the construction of broad-gauge locomotives it would be one of the factors making it possible. The committee found that the choice of pacific engines was justified. It was the most popular type in the world for fast passenger trains. As regards the design, the committee found that as power units the engines appeared to have been justified, as an important factor in the locomotive was the capacity for load. He pointed out that between Karachi and Lahore 5, X. C.'s, which was the most powerful of the three types, were in use and six of these did work for ten of the older type. Coal consumption was cut by a quarter and the annual saving due to these engines was estimated to be five and a half lakhs. But the committee found that the original design was not suitable for high speed. They were satisfactory so long as the track was good but extraordinarily sensitive to track irregularities. There had been insufficient appreciation of the close interdependence of the track and the engine. But he did not think the designers were negligent. They used all the skill and experience available and were untiring in making alterations and experiments. As regards purchase, Sir Andrew said it concerned only X. A.'s and X. B.'s. Apart from two X. B.'s. ordered in 1934 for the M. S. M. Railway no orders had been placed for any engines after 1930. Those ordered in 1920-30 were ordered either before complaints were received or before there was reason to believe that there would be serious trouble. As two years were needed for full trials it would be not unfair to say that all the engines except two in 1934 were ordered without trial or full trial. The reasons for the step were mainly the standardisation policy, the need for a wide fire box to have second class coal and great shortage of engines. The committee, while holding that a wiser course would have been to continue to purchase the older types, did not believe that the effect of trials at the time would have made any material difference in the operating conditions. Referring to the important question of relations between the locomotive and the track, Sir Andrew said the main problem was if the front and back wheels were able to slide easily across, the locomotive engine was liable to hunt badly so as to cause distortion. If on the other hand they too were stiff a great pressure would be exercised on the cougars and again there might be distortion. The committee found that the highest forces on rail were exercised by the front driving wheels and the main recommendations were designed to transfer the pressure to the guiding wheels. So far as the experiments went they confirmed the soundness of the committee's views. There were 284 engines of the three types in India. He said that most of them had rendered excellent service. There was no evidence that they had proved unsuitable for the branch lines. As a result of the further experiments they had conducted they had reason to believe that they knew how to cure hunting though that was no justification for the steps already taken.

## ADJOURNMENT OF DEBATE

After Sir *Andrew Clow*'s speech, Sir *Yashwantrao Chavan* proposed adjournment of the debate till the Delhi session. He said that though he did not agree with the Congress party's absence he felt the House would be enhancing its reputation if in order to enable the Congressmen to take part in the debate it agreed to

post-pone the consideration of a highly technical important document. The Leader of the House, Sir *Zafarullah Khan* opposed the motion stating that if business was postponed purely on the ground that some members abstained from attending the session then the business of the Government would become impossible. Mr. *F. E. James* was agreeable to a brief adjournment for a few days but not till the Delhi session. *Mulvi Mohammad Abdul Ghani* and Mr. *Mohamed Azhar Ali* supported the postponement till the Delhi session. Mr. *Jinnah* said the House need not stop the business because some party was absent but postponement for a few days would help the members to take a useful part in the debate. Sir *Andrew Clow* agreeing to postponement for a few days said that only half a day would be given for discussion. The House then adjourned.

#### HINDU WOMEN'S DIVORCE BILL

81st. AUGUST :—The Assembly discussed to-day Dr. *Deshmukh's* Bill to confer the right of divorce on Hindu women. In contrast to the Delhi session at which Dr. *Deshmukh* moved his motion, the galleries were practically empty to-day, women being conspicuous by their absence. *Bhai Paramanand*, Mr. *Lalchand Navarai* and Mr. *Bajoria*, members of the Congress Nationalist Party, opposed the Bill. *Bhai Paramanand* objected to the principle of the measure, and declared that it sought to introduce in India a system which had brought unhappiness and misery and wrecked homes in the West. Apart from that, the Bill was one-sided. It did not confer the right of divorce on husbands. Just as there were cases in which women suffered from the cruelty of husbands, there were also cases in which husbands suffered from ill-treatment by wives. Mr. *Lalchand Navarai* asserted that Dr. *Deshmukh* knew nothing of the conditions that obtained outside Bombay city. If he did, he would not have brought forward a Bill of this kind. Once a Bill of this kind became law, continued Mr. *Navarai*, institutions like the *Om Mandali* would receive the fullest encouragement. Then, they should bid farewell to domestic peace and harmony. Mr. *Bajoria* took his stand on Hindu *Shastras* and quoted a number of Sanskrit verses in support of his thesis, that as marriage was a sacrament there could be no severing of that sacred tie even by death. Ninety-nine per cent of Hindu women themselves were opposed to the Bill, because they were convinced that it would disrupt Hindu society and culture. In the land of its origin, divorce was looked upon as an epidemic like smallpox, and a pest like the rinderpest. Sir *Yamin Khan*, speaking on behalf of the Muslim League Party, said that though as a rule his party did not interfere in social measures which the Hindu community wanted to introduce in their own society, yet they would be untrue to their heritage as Muslims if they opposed a measure embodying a principle which Islam had handed on as a torch to other nations in the world. Islam, he said, was the first to recognise the right of men as well as of women to separate if they could not live together and Protestant Christians had adopted that system and incorporated it in their law. Mr. *Umar Ali Shah* quoted verses from the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, which, he contended, supported the theory that the right of divorce was exercised by Hindu women in the olden days. *Maulana Zafar Ali*, speaking on behalf of the Muslim League Party, said : "We are always on the side of right. When the Congress is in the right, we are with the Congress. If the Government are in the right, we are with them. Wherever we do not agree with them, we sit on the fence" (laughter). Because his Party was always on the side of right, they should support the principle of the Bill, even though the Party which brought forward the Bill was absent. The right of divorce was conferred on women 1,800 years ago by Islam. Christians did not for a long time recognise that right. They said that marriages were made in Heaven : but marriages were really made in *Gretna Green* (laughter). So, Christians also eventually accepted divorce. Hinduism was now awakening after thousands of years and accepting the principle which, as Mr. *Umar Ali Shah* had shown, had been followed by them in the *Mahabharata* days. Mr. *M. S. Ansy*, Leader of the Congress Nationalist Party, said that the institution of marriage could be considered either as a sacrament or as a contract. If it was a contract, then it should be fair to both the parties. On that basis, the privilege of divorce should not be given to women and denied to men as the Bill sought to. But his conviction was that Hindu marriages were a sacrament and the *shastras* did not recognise divorce. The Sanskrit language had no word for divorce in its vocabulary. There, undoubtedly, were castes among Hindus who practised divorce, but it was a custom with no religious sanction behind it. The quotations given by Mr. *Umar Ali Shah* in support of the contention, that a woman was allowed to marry a second husband in the life-time of her first husband,

referred Rakesha and Paisacha marriages, forced marriages, and would not afford any basis for legislation to deal with marriages that obtained in Hindu society now, when the girl on marriage took over the *guthra* of the husband. The absence of religious sanction for the system of divorce proceeded Mr. An-y, did not necessarily mean that this or any other reform should not be attempted. He did not mean that. But he looked at the position from a different point of view. Was Hindu society ready for this reform just now? In attempting to answer this question, the House should remember that the legislature had some sixty years ago passed the Widow Remarriage Act. How many Hindu widows had taken advantage of it? Very few, because, from his own experience he had found, that young men of marriageable age might talk on the platform in favour of widow remarriage, but would not themselves readily put it into practice. If that was the state of preparedness of Hindu society, was it right that they should enact a law which would have the effect of adding to the number of women who, because they had been divorced, were in a state of enforced widowhood? Mr. An-y proceeded to refer to many defects in the Bill, such as, absence of any provision with regard to inheritance or the maintenance of the children of the divorced wife. With all his sympathy for Dr. Deshmukh's objective, he had no alternative but to oppose the Bill. Mr. Azhar Ali said that Hindu males had no need for the right to divorce as they could marry as many wives as they desired. It was the Hindu woman that suffered and hence the Bill. Mr. Azhar Ali had not concluded his speech when the House rose for the day.

#### ADVANTAGE OF PROTECTIVE TARIFFS

1st. SEPTEMBER:—Discussion was resumed on the Congress party's resolution moved during the Delhi session by Mr. Gadjil recommending measures legislative or otherwise to be taken immediately to prevent companies and concerns, the capital, membership, control or management of which is not predominantly Indian, from taking advantage of the protective tariffs imposed to foster industrial development in this country. An amendment to the resolution had been moved during the Delhi session by Mr. Sathar Sait to lay down that the companies which should be prevented from taking advantage of the protective tariff should include companies which did not employ all the Indian communities in due proportion in their services. Mr. Sait this morning concluded his unfinished speech and after Mr. James had indicated the European group's opposition to the resolution and the amendment, the Government's attitude was explained by Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Commerce Member, who made his first speech in the House and appealed to the members to reject both the resolution and the amendment. Mr. Sait declared that the protected industries were being built up by the consumers among whom were members of every community in the country. The consumers, therefore, had the right to demand that the benefits made possible by their sacrifice should accrue to them and not wholly to a handful of people who held the key positions in the industries. Mr. F. E. James dealing first with the amendment declared that it was wholly impracticable and no Indian or British business could be run if the principles advocated in it were adopted. As for the resolution, the first question was whether the term "Indian" intended to exclude all but the Indian nationals. If so, it was highly discriminatory and would drive all the British concerns and many Indo-British concerns which were operating under the protective tariff wall out of business. It went beyond anything yet suggested either by the Nehru Report or the Federal Structure Sub-Committee of the R. T. C. or any representations made by any Indian commercial body to that conference or the Joint Select Committee. The European community, declared Mr. James, had always been prepared to align itself with the findings of the Fiscal Commission except the provision in the case of a public company that the proportion of directors which the Government might prescribe must consist of Indians. After quoting Mahatma Gandhi in support Mr. James said that resolutions such as the one before the House would force the community to look to the statutory safeguards for protection rather than to the goodwill of the people of the country, a process that was not in the interests of Indians or the Europeans. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, who was cheered as he rose, explained the policy of discriminating protection which, he said, would be more happily phrased as 'protection granted with due discrimination'. The controversy over the question whether the foreign companies should be allowed to establish themselves under the tariff wall had been going on for the last 20 years. A great deal had been said about the consumer paying for protection and about the foreign companies walking away with the benefit of that protection. It looked as if

the only object of granting protection was to give a certain amount of profit for investment of capital. That was one of the last considerations in granting protection. (Cheers.) Improvement in labour conditions, training of Indian technical skill and skill in management and using of Indian raw products were even more relevant considerations. The statement that foreign companies were walking away with large profits from protected industries was not exactly borne out by the constant complaints he had received since he took office. For example, the sugar industry was making very little profit. Furthermore, the indications now were that the Indian capital was not enthusiastic in coming forth to be employed in protected industries. The Indian capital was once again fighting shy of industrial investment. Referring to the amendment, the Commerce Member declared that to ask private companies to adopt a communal policy in regard to the employment of labour was beyond the power even of the Government of India, powerful as it was. He urged the House to reject the resolution and the amendment. The resolution and the amendment were therefore lost without division.

#### RELIEF IN INCOME-TAX

The next resolution was moved by *Sheikh Rafiuddin Ahmed Siddiqui* asking that those who were compelled to pay employment tax in the province should be given relief of an equal amount in the income-tax payable to the centre and the amount so deducted should be written off against the province's share of contributions under the Niemeyer Award. The resolution supported by Mr. *Nauman* and *Su Yamin Khan* and opposed by the *Finance Member*, Mr. *Joshi* and Mr. *Aney* was eventually withdrawn. The mover and Mr. *Nauman* objected to the double taxation involved in the levy of employment tax. Mr. *Nauman* asked for adjustment of the taxation policy between the centre and the provinces and urged that during the interval the relief asked for should be given.

Declaring that the resolution was unnecessary, Sir *Jeremy Raisman*, Finance Member, said that the employment tax was either income-tax or it was not. If it was an income-tax it trenched upon the central field and could not remain in existence. If it was not there was no reason for giving any relief at the expense of a province. The situation which the resolution purported to deal with was a situation which could not arise. As regards the larger question of overlapping of fiscal jurisdiction, it was not a question to be dealt with by a conference of finance authorities. It was a problem for the courts to deal with and not for a conference to decide by a gentleman's agreement. Messrs. *Joshi* and *Aney* contended that there was nothing wrong in double taxation. Mr. *Aney* felt surprised that an elected member who understood the importance of provincial autonomy should ask the Central Government to force a province not to exercise the powers given to it under the Act.

#### BANDRA BOAT DISASTER

A resolution by Mr. *Lalchand Navalrai* urging the Government to institute an enquiry into the *Bandra Boat disaster* at Karachi in which five Sindhi students lost their lives was rejected by the Assembly. The *Commerce Member*, on behalf of the Government, expressed inability either to institute an enquiry or to give compensation to the relations of the victims. He said that the case was enquired into by the city magistrate of Karachi assisted by naval technicians and was further enquired into by the Court of Admiralty in London which completely exonerated the pilot but censured the master of the ship which collided with the boat. Government could not do anything more after this verdict by the highest tribunal in the empire so far as naval cases were concerned. The House at this stage adjourned till the 4th.

#### MORATORIUM IN RAILWAYS

4th. SEPTEMBER:—The Assembly agreed to-day by 43 votes to 20 to the *Finance Member's* resolution extending up to April 1, 1942, the moratorium in payments to the Depreciation Reserve Fund maintained by the railways and arrears of contributions to the general railway fund. The resolution was opposed by the Muslim League Party who insisted on an undertaking to be given by the Government in the House that a committee of the House would be appointed to go into the whole question of railway finance. One or two members of the Congress Nationalist party voted with the Muslim League Party against the resolution.

Sir *Jeremy Raisman*, Finance member, in commending the resolution, recalled the resolution on similar lines passed by the House in October, 1937, and explained

that Government had no option but to continue to treat the arrears to the Depreciation Reserve Fund in the same way, as under that resolution, unless they were prepared to raise sums from the general tax-payer to pay the amounts due to the provinces under the Niemeyer Order-in Council. As regards the arrears of contributions to the general revenues, he explained that until the railways produced a surplus of the order of four crores and a half, the question of paying these arrears would not arise. Sir Jeremy expressed his full sympathy with the feeling of many members of the House that the Separation Convention of 1924 was due for reconsideration. It was obvious that it had failed in many important respects. He knew that on the last occasion it was suggested that some change might be made before the question of continuing this moratorium came before the House. The Government had gone into the question but their examination had disclosed how completely they were tied by the existing arrangement. He was prepared to undertake that the question relating to the Separation Convention and the question of evolving a more suitable system for the future would be gone into during the period of extension of the moratorium, but until the period of five years under the Niemeyer Award ended, no departure from the existing practice could be made.

Mr. L. C. Buss, on behalf of the European Group, gave reluctant support to the resolution as a temporary expedient. In his view, the moratorium and the cancellation were much the same thing and he did not quite understand the view that the millstone of these arrears should be carried forward in the hope that by some miracle it would be transmuted into gold (Laughter). A revision of the Separation Convention was imperative. Prof. Banerji criticised the "extravagance of the railways" while Sardar Sant Singh, after congratulating the Government on their new policy of trusting the House as exemplified by the statement of the Leader of the House, denounced the practice of cancellation or repudiation of debts. Mr. Azhar Ali considered that the railways were being mismanaged. Mr. Nauman suggested that a committee of the House should be appointed to go into the whole question of railway finance. Mr. Joshi thought that the Depreciation Reserve Fund has been built upon an extravagant scale and when too much was hoarded, the natural tendency was to raid the board. The real sufferers were the railway employees who, he declared, were denied their due share by way of wages. Maulana Zafar Ali refused to accept the principle of repudiation of debts. Mr. Jinnah declared that unless the Government accepted the proposal for a committee of the House, he was unable to support the resolution. Sir Jeremy Rasmun, in replying to the debate, thought that the discussion had ranged over a field which would be more suitable to the debate on the railway budget. Here was one large Government Department with which certain financial arrangements had been made. As a result of experience, both the civil and railway sides now agreed that certain adjustments should be made in that arrangements and he could not for the life of him see how the principle of repudiation of debts was involved in that. The House carried the resolution by a majority.

#### CENSUS BILL

The House passed the *Census Bill*, the *Indian Salt Act (Amendment) Bill*, the *Civil Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill* and the *Indian Tea Cess Act (Amendment) Bill* and referred to a Select Committee the *Bill to amend the Indian Railways Act*.

Mr. J. A. Thorne, Home Member, moving the consideration of the Census Bill said, "I take it as a good omen that the first Bill that should come up for consideration by this House after the declaration of war yesterday should be one that presupposes a state of peace and security in India and, in fact, throughout the world. May I express the hope that victory and peace will be achieved in time for us to complete the preparations necessary for the Census of 1941?" The Indian Census, he continued, was a remarkable achievement both in the magnitude of the population to be dealt with and in the lowness of the cost at which the enumeration was made. It was in fact a great national effort. Experts have commended the high level reached by the Indian Census.

Dr. Banerjes moved for the reference of the Bill to a Select Committee and was supported by Sir Henry Gidney, Sardar Sant Singh and Mr. Aney. They pointed out that many inaccuracies existed in the last Census and they apprehended that deliberate inaccuracies might be more in the coming Census as a result of the unhealthy zeal of communal enumerators trying to represent the number of one particular community as larger than they actually were and there was no means of checking the accuracy because the returns were

confidential and no one had access to them. The *Home Member*, replying, said that the communal suspicions appear to have been engendered during the last few hours. No members had apparently thought of them previously because no amendment to deal with the possibility of a communal danger had been tabled. As regards the confidential nature of the returns, he referred to the attempts that had been made to have the Census records produced in courts to prove or rebut alibis (Laughter) and said it was in order to prevent these abuses that the returns should be kept entirely confidential. The Select Committee motion was rejected without a division and the Bill was passed without an amendment. The House then adjourned.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA BILL

5th. SEPTEMBER :—In accordance with the announcement made yesterday Sir *Zafrullah Khan* introduced to-day the bills embodying the provisions of the Ordinances. The Defence of India Bill provides special measures to ensure the public safety, interest and defence of British India and for the trial of certain offences. It reproduces the provision of the Defence of India Ordinance issued on Sunday night.

#### INDIAN TARIFF ACT AMEND. BILL

Sir *Ramaswami Mudaliar*, Commerce Member, introduced a bill to make good the defects in the Indian Tariff Act of 1934 and to validate the levy and collection of duty on the import of wood pulp under the two Tariff Bills passed at the Delhi session this year. The Muslim League Party walked out of the House as a protest against what was regarded as 'an uncompromising attitude' of the Government spokesman. Mr. *Azhar Ali*, a member of the party, desired to move an amendment to clause 3 of the Medical Diplomas Bill, laying down conditions for excluding from practice British subjects domiciled in the United Kingdom or India who hold diplomas granted in the United Kingdom on the ground of inadequacy of such diplomas. The amendment sought to provide that knowledge of the vernacular of the place where he intends to practise be made one of the conditions whereon such practitioner should be permitted to practise in India. The Leader of the House, Sir *Zafrulla Khan* objected to the amendment on the ground of want of sufficient time. The Chair disallowed it. The League party thereupon opposed the whole clause 3 which, was however, passed by a majority.

#### ARBITRATION BILL

Sir *Zafrullah Khan's* motion to refer the Arbitration Bill to a select committee was passed after a brief debate in the course of which the mover stated that if the Congress party returned to the House before the end of the current session, it was his intention to move for the inclusion of their representative in the select committee.

#### ADJ. MOTION—THE CHATFIELD REPORT

As there was no other business on the order paper the House agreed to take up immediately, instead of the usual hour, an adjournment motion on the Government decision on the Chatfield report. Sir *Raza Ali*, moving for the adjournment of the House, declared that the report of the Chatfield Committee caused grave discontent in India from end to end. It was an ex-parte report produced behind the backs of Indians. In the war that had started India was asked to do all she could to help Britain. But what the Government had done to prepare India and make her self-sufficient in matters of defence so that she could defend herself and help Britain and other parts of the globe? No doubt she had made a gift of 34 million pounds but it was not a large sum compared with the expenses of modern war. Sir *Raza* complained that the committee made no recommendations regarding Indianization. He also criticized the Government of India's policy of exclusion of Indians from key positions in defence matters. Mr. *F. E. James* referred to the fact that the committee had invited all Indians, who wanted to give their views to appear before them and invitation had been accepted by those who took a realistic view of India's defence problems. The committee did make use of the cooperation of such Indians. Indianization, however, was not within the committee's terms of reference. As regards consulting the House, Mr. *James* said that in military matters there was such a thing as secrecy to be observed and it would have been the height of folly if his Majesty's Government had agreed to make the recommendations of the committee a subject of party politics in India. The British Government which was making a gift of £34 millions to India had not consulted its Parliament

before deciding to make the gift. He begged of the members to take a realistic view of the times. Sir *Zafarullah Khan*, Law Member, said that he wished that in all matters of dispute in which he was involved he could get an ex parte decision so entirely in his favour as the one against which Sir *Raza Ali* was complaining. Matters dealt with in the decisions on the Chatfield report were matters of a kind on which the executive Government should take responsibility upon themselves, Sir *Zafarullah* declared. They were not matters which could be placed before the legislature. The British Government undertook the responsibility of providing for the cost of modernizing the Indian army because Indian resources were not equal to the demand. The British Government had undertaken that responsibility without consulting Parliament. Sir *Sanjiv Singh* sought the elucidation of two apparently irreconcilable statements made in the committee report firstly, that if Indian troops were employed beyond India's borders in the defence of India, then Indians would bear the ordinary cost; and, secondly, that troops would not be employed outside India at the cost of Indian revenues. The declared sum granted by the British Government should be spent in building armament factories and allied industries in India. Mr. *C. M. G. Ogilvie*, Defence Secretary, observed that it was rather difficult to criticize a gift such as the one given by the British Government and he sympathized with the supporters of the motion who found themselves in difficulties. 'We are now at war and in order to assist us to play whatever part we may have to play we received this large measure of help'. Replying to Sir *Sanjiv Singh*, Mr. *Ogilvie* explained that in accordance with the decisions on the report India's liabilities for external defence had been limited to the smallest extent possible. India's commitments with regard to troops that might be called up in main at India's outer bastions had been limited to about one-tenth of the forces she maintained. If forces in excess of this percentage were required to be used for external defence she should not be called upon to pay for them. As regards the expenditure of money, Mr. *Ogilvie* said that much material must of course be from England. It would not be permitted to issue tenders in India for the purchase of light tanks (laughter), but whatever could be produced in India would be used. The existing ordnance factories would be extended to the utmost possible extent and everything would be done to enable them to produce more. (Cheers.) As it was now the hour at which the House agreed to terminate the debate and as the mover did not want division, the motion was talked out.

#### Recommendations of the Chatfield Committee

The substance of the main recommendations of the Chatfield Committee report is published in the form of a despatch from his Majesty's Government to the Viceroy. It contains 15 paragraphs of a close review of the present position of the Army in India and the proposals for organizing, equipping and maintaining the forces in India in accordance with modern requirements. The proposals affect the Army, Air and Naval forces maintained by the Government of India.

It is stated that to bring the equipment and organization of the defence forces in India into line with modern conditions, both internationally and technically, India requires a capital sum of 41 crores. The first outstanding fact of this despatch is a free gift of 33½ crores by the Government of the United Kingdom and a loan of 11½ crores free of interest for the next five years.

The second point of interest is the reduction in the establishment of British troops in India by about 25 per cent. of that obtaining on July 1, 1938, which comprises two regiments of the cavalry, an equivalent of three regiments of the artillery and six battalions of the infantry.

The sole condition attached to that magnificent gift is that India should bring her defence forces upto the standard of equipment necessitated by modern warfare and adjust her strategical plans to the conditions obtaining in the world today.

The despatch from his Majesty's Government on the Chatfield report reviews the background of its appointment and enquiry and says that the committee considered the suggestion that it might be similar, cheaper and more effective to maintain separate specialized forces for purposes such as frontier watch and ward and internal security. They concluded, however, for many reasons the suggestion could not be supported. Based on these and other conclusions, the committee recommended a thorough-going scheme for the re-equipment of all branches of the service. One of the most important features of the proposal is the mechanization of the bulk of the cavalry and of the first line transport of a large portion of the infantry, with the object of greatly increasing the mobility of the units. With the increased effi-



ney and mobility afforded by modernization, it becomes possible to provide equal security with fewer troops, though it has to be recognized that the maintenance costs of modernized units are higher.

The Committee carefully considered these factors in relation to the defence requirements of India and to the need for keeping the maintenance cost of the army within the compass of what India can afford.

The total reduction of British troops as measured with the establishments on July, 1, 1938, is approximately 25 per cent. In this connection, it has to be remembered that while the reduction of British units on the Indian establishment implies their transfer to the Home establishment and consequently their retention as part of the available combating forces, the reduction of Indian units must be absolute in so far as they can be employed at the cost of non-Indian revenues, in overseas stations.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF ARMY IN INDIA

1. The basis of distribution of the army in India will be—(a) Frontier defence (b) Internal security (c) Coast defence (d) General reserve (e) External defence troops.

#### MODERNIZED UNITS

2. Types of modernized units will be as follows :—

British and Indian cavalry light tank regiments—equipped with light tanks and armoured carriers for reconnaissance.

Indian cavalry armoured regiments—equipped with light tanks and armoured cars.

Indian cavalry motor regiments—provided with motor transport for conveyance of personnel who will normally be on foot.

British and Indian field artillery regiments—all regiments are to be mechanized and in due course equipped with twenty-five-pounder guns.

Sappers and Miners units—with mechanical power tools.

British and Indian infantry battalions—armed with rifles, Brens and two-inch mortars and fully mechanized first line transport.

Units on the north-western frontier will retain a certain proportion of pack mules.

#### AIR FORCES

3. The air forces in India will be re-equipped with modern aircraft as follows :—

Bomber squadrons—Blenheims.

Army Cooperation Squadrons—Lysanders.

Bomber transport squadrons—Valentias.

The Indian Air Force squadron, at present being formed is expected to be complete by the end of 1940.

Volunteer flights for coast defence duties will be raised at certain ports.

#### ROYAL INDIAN NAVY

4. The following new vessels will be ordered for the Royal Indian Navy.

(a) Four 'bittern' class escort vessels. (b) Four 'mastiff' class trawlers.

The *Indus* and the *Hindustan* will be re-equipped with new armament.

#### ORDNANCE FACTORIES

5. In order to make India as far as possible self-sufficient in the supply of munitions in war the existing ordnance factories will be expanded or reconstructed. Where necessary, entirely new factories will be built.

Announcing that his Majesty's Government consider that the Committee's proposals should be accepted, subject only to a few minor modifications, the despatch says : 'In reaching this conclusion his Majesty's Government have taken full account of the heavy capital cost involved, which has been estimated at some 84.33 million sterling or over 45 crores of rupees. His Majesty's Government have accepted that this capital expenditure cannot be found out of the resources available in India. They, therefore, propose to seek the authority of Parliament for its provisions from the Home Exchequer'.

It is estimated that a period of five years would be required for the completion of the modernization plan, and the provision of the total capital sum would accordingly be spread over this period. Of the total amount three quarters would be provided as a gift while one quarter would be advanced by way of a loan. The interest

on this portion would however, be entirely remitted for the first five years ; there-after interest would become payable together with the instalment of capital.

(Continuing, the despatch refers to 'the principle hitherto accepted' that India should be responsible for a 'minor danger' while Great Britain should be responsible 'for a major danger' of attack by a great Power upon India or upon the Empire through India. 'Modern developments have, however, clearly shown how vulnerable India is to attack in other forms than those that were envisaged when the principle was first laid down. Such attacks, if they should ever mature, would so vitally affect India's own well-being that they would demand immediate cooperation in effective measures for India's defence. In such cases India's defence would purely be effectively and economically assured by cooperation in the defence of points outside India strategically essential to her security. Thus the Committee have recommended a general principle that the forces maintained by India should be adequate not merely for the narrower purposes of purely local defence, but also to assist in maintaining what they describe as 'India's external security', and further that India should acknowledge that her responsibilities cannot, in her own interest, be already limited to the local defence of her land frontiers and coasts.

Finally, the despatch says: The scale of forces recommended is intended to be adequate, though not more than adequate for India's purely local defence together with a margin if need be for her external defence. His Majesty's Government consider that the Committee have made out a convincing case for other proposals and they hope that the principles advocated by the Committee will commend themselves to the Government of India and to all who are prepared to take a realistic view of India's defence requirements in modern circumstances.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA BILL (CONTD.)

8th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly spent the whole time today in discussing the motion of Sir *Zafrullah Khan*, Law Member, that the Defence of India Bill be taken into consideration together with the amendments suggesting the reference of the Bill to a select committee. Sir *Zafrullah Khan*, moving his motion, observed that the wide powers given by the Bill were essential for the successful prosecution of the war and to control the disloyal and mischievous tendencies which might cause serious damage to India's ability to help in the prosecution of the war. The Bill was largely based on the Act of 1915 passed to meet a similar emergency with certain adaptations rendered necessary by the present state of affairs. Two or three motions had been tabled for the reference of the Bill to a select committee, he proceeded, but many on the Government side were bearing an extremely heavy burden and the consideration of time at this stage was particularly a weighty one. He was not asking the House to pass the Bill by the afternoon. Though it was an emergency measure the House nevertheless was entitled to discuss it and scrutinise the provision but it would not be in the best interests to insist upon the measure being sent to a select committee. Mr. *Chaudhury* and Mr. *Essak Saif* moved their amendments to refer the Bill to a select committee. Mr. *Chaudhury* declared that the country had no hand in the declaration of the war and the House had not been consulted. The *Chair* held that the discussion of the merits and the genesis of the war was not relevant. Mr. *Chaudhury* urged that the select committee should, among other points, consider whether the Bill should come into force in the country until there was actual war within her boundaries. The committee should also consider whether any statements made in India against the allies should be punished as the Bill sought to do. Mr. *Essak Saif* said that the Muslim League party was willing to concede that the Government of India should take such measures as were necessary for the defence of India and for the successful prosecution of the war, but there was a possibility of the wide powers given by the Bill being misused; hence the motion for a select committee. He added that it was not a dilatory motion, his only anxiety being to ensure that the Bill should serve for which it was meant and should not go beyond. Mr. *Aikman*, leader of the European group, said that he was not certain that reference to a select committee would not expedite the passing of this Bill. Referring to the Bill, he said that the ordinance on which it was based indicated how much better prepared the Government of India was as compared to 1914. India's future was bound up with the future of the Empire, France and liberty-loving countries and her effectiveness of defence, manpower and supplies were therefore of the greatest importance. He was glad that the Government were alive to the danger of profiteering. *Sardar Bant Singh* declared that the only consideration was whether the powers demanded

by the executive would rightly be used and he wanted an assurance. He asked that the rules under the Bill should be embodied in the Bill itself. He added that no harm would be done if the select committee took time to consider the measures fully and eliminated all objectionable features. Mr. F. E. James said that after the assurance given by the deputy leader of the Muslim League the Government should reconsider their attitude to the motion for reference to a select committee. He accepted the desirability of saving time, but he hoped that the Government would appreciate the value to them and to the country of carrying all communities in this country with them. Sir Yamin Khan said that there was full and whole-hearted cooperation from non-official benches on the issue of war and such cooperation demanded reciprocal cooperation from the Government. A little delay by the select committee would not be waste of time. Mr. N. M. Jovhi made the only speech of the day opposing the Bill outright. He declared that it was premature and too wide in scope and that a consequence of it would be that the activities of the working classes in the country would be severely restricted. Those who studied the life of the working classes knew that their wages did not rise with a rise in the cost of living which had already begun to be felt with a rise in the prices of commodities. Sir Zafrullah said that he did not like to rake up bitter memories but the sufferings of the Punjab to which Sardar Sant Singh referred occurred under the martial law ordinance which had been issued because the province was declared to be in a state of rebellion and one section of the people were at loggerheads with the Government. That position did not exist today and that was not the position with which the present Bill was intended to deal. If Sardar Sant Singh wanted an assurance of the kind Mr. Churchill gave in Parliament Sir Zafrullah Khan was prepared to give. He read the words of Mr. Churchill expressing hope that the powers to curtail many valuable rights and liberties in emergency would rest in the hands that would not abuse them but would cherish them and that we looked forward to the time when those liberties and rights would be restored to the people. He was grateful. Sir Zafrullah proceeded, to the members who had given the assurance regarding the expeditious passage of the Bill after it had emerged from the select committee. On the basis of that assurance that having regard to the time at their disposal the Bill would be treated as a special case he was willing to accept the amendment for reference to a select committee (cheers). But if there was any use at all in referring it to a select committee it would be absolutely impossible to report within 48 hours as Mr. Chaudhury wanted. Mr. Essak Sait's amendment giving time up to Sept. 15 was more practicable but the personnel of the committee would need to include two more official members. The mover of the amendment agreed to their inclusion. The House agreed for reference to the select committee.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS PASSED

The House next passed two official bills, one amending the Tariff Act and the other amending the law of evidence in respect of certain commercial documents as reported by the select committee. The first was moved by Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Commerce Member, who sought to make good certain defects in the law which were brought to light by a scrutiny of the Indian Tariff Act Amendment Bills passed at the Delhi session and to validate the levy and collection of duty on imported wood pulp for the period from 1st to 20th April. The amount was Rs. 22,000 and if the amendment was not passed it might have to be refunded.

#### H. E. the Viceroy's Address

The Assembly at this stage adjourned till Monday, the 11th. September, when H. E. the Viceroy addressed a joint session of both houses.

His Excellency said : 'Gentlemen, I have in the first place to read to you a gracious message to India from his Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor which I have just received and which I think can most appropriately, first be announced in the presence of the Central Legislature :—It is as follows :

"In these days when the whole of civilization is threatened, the widespread attachment of India to the cause in which we have taken arms has been a source of deep satisfaction to me. I also value most highly the many and generous offers of assistance made to me by the Princes and people of India. I am confident that in the struggle upon which I and my peoples have now entered we can count on the sympathy and support from every quarter of the Indian continent in the face

of the common danger. Britain is fighting for no selfish ends but for the maintenance of a principle vital to the future of mankind—the principle that relations between civilised states must be regulated not by force but by reason and law so that men live free from terror of war, to pursue happiness and well-being which should be the destiny of mankind.”

“The message is signed by his Majesty's own hand.

#### RUTHLESS GERMAN ATTACK

“We are all of us by now only too familiar with the circumstances in which Germany has attacked her neighbour state. We have seen even in a week that has elapsed since the outbreak of war the spirit in which that war is likely to be waged by Germany's rulers. We have seen a ruthless onslaught upon Poland without a declaration of war; the sinking without warning of the liner *Athenia* and loss of life that has followed; complete and cynical disregard by rulers of the German people of those principles, the establishment and maintenance of which has been the general object of civilised mankind in past years. It is clear beyond any question in the present circumstances that, hateful as the idea of war may be to us, we and the nations associated with us are left with no alternative. There is no means of replying to an unprovoked and wanton onslaught that has been made on a peaceful country but by resorting ourselves to force. But in resorting to force we can at least do so with confidence as to purity of our motives, and as to unselfishness of considerations which have led us to our decision. I need not to-day enlarge on the importance of the issues. All of you are familiar with them. But I would again emphasise the impossibility which confronts us in the face of repeated breaches of faith, breaches of honourable understanding over the past year or more, of trusting the word of the rulers of the German people—a point which the Prime Minister forcibly brought out in his recent address to Germany. Nothing could be more damning than the plain recital of the fact. We have been assured time and again that Germany had no further territorial ambition in Europe and that assurance has been repudiated on every occasion on which it has suited the rulers of Germany to repudiate it.

#### BROKEN PLEDGES

“We have been assured that Germany would respect the Treaty of Locarno; that she had no designs on former Czechoslovakia; that she was concerned only to restore to Germany the Sudeten fringes of Czechoslovakia and had no designs on Czechoslovak centre of the country; that she did not aim at the incorporation in her territories of citizens of any non-German nation or race; that she did not contemplate the annexation of Austria; that she had no designs on Poland, for many years in the difficult post-war period a trusting friend bound to her by treaties of alliance. That long list does not exhaust the tale of German pledges publicly given in the most binding and most sacred fashion. Not single one of those pledges has been honoured. Each one of them has been broken with the entire disregard for those standards of truth and international morality on the basis of which alone the world can hold together or hope to progress. And those breaches of faith have been not merely a breach of faith. They have represented the denial of justice; a refusal to recognise any guiding principle save that of force; a complete and cynical disregard for the principles that regulate intercourse of nation with nation; an anxiety to turn to the fullest advantage the absence of preparedness of those nations who had believed in the sanctity and in the sacredness of the undertakings given on behalf of a great nation by rulers of that nation.

#### APPEAL FOR UNITY

“Now that decision is taken now that it is clear that no course other than armed resistance will enable us and countries allied with us to preserve the principle for which we fight, I would make only one appeal to-day. My appeal is one for unity. In the message which I have just read his Imperial Majesty has told us of the deep satisfaction caused to him by, in his own words, “the wide-spread attachment of India to the cause in which we have taken up arms”.

#### PRINCIPLES AT STAKE

“Our task must be to indicate the principles at stake, to work together in the closest unity for the furthering of our common object. Nothing could be more significant than the unanimity of approach of all in India—Princes, leaders of great political parties, ordinary man and woman; or than the contributions, whether in offers of personal service, or men or money, that have already reached me from the

Princes and people of India. There could be no more striking evidence of the depth of the appeal of the issues now before us. I am confident that, however difficult may be the days that lie ahead of us (and the teaching of history shows us clearly the folly of assuming in a struggle of the magnitude of the present that victory will be easy or that course of a campaign, whatever it may be, will be unchequered) India will speak and act as one and that her contribution will be worthy of her ancient name.'

'Gentlemen, in the circumstances such as those in which we are met together to-day you will not expect me to deal with matters of more ordinary interest which in the normal course would have figured in my address to the Central Legislature. I am certain that I shall be voicing the wishes of all of you if I confine my remarks today to the war and to the issues that directly concern or arise out of the war. But I feel that it is only proper that I should express my own confidence that whatever may be the task that, as the campaign develops, may fall to the lot of our defence forces whether by sea, by land or in air the response will be one worthy of those glorious traditions, fame and renown which are world-wide. They are already as you know represented overseas and our fighting forces can claim to be assisting at the very outset of war, in holding posts of vast and critical importance. To the civil population of the country and to the civil services whether at the centre or provinces, I would say that the past experience has shown the spirit in which we may anticipate their answer to the new call which is being made upon them and to the new tasks which they have to undertake. These are anxious and difficult times in which heavy burdens personal as well as general must necessarily weigh upon all of us whoever and wherever we may be. I am certain that those burdens will be sustained in a manner worthy of our past.

#### INDIAN DEFENCE

'Before I conclude my remarks to you today there are two matters, both of them arising out of the present situation, on which I would say a word. The first is the acceptance by his Majesty's Government and the Government of India of the conclusions of the Chatfield Committee as expressed in a recently published dispatch. That decision marks an epoch in the history of Indian defence. Great problems which confronted us in the matter of defence consequent on changes in the international situation and development of modern armaments are now in a fair way to solution. They have been a constant concern of my advisers, and particularly of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, for many months past. The result of the deliberations which have taken place is on a broad view satisfactory in the highest degree. In particular, I am glad to think not only that improvements so essential at the present stage of the world's history should be so far advanced, but that, thanks to the most generous measure of help which has been extended to us, the necessity of laying heavy additional burdens on the tax-payer has been avoided. The profound significance of the decisions that have been taken lies in the fact that India—so largely an agricultural country which could never save at the cost of complete disregard to other calls, have hoped to make available vast sums of money necessary for re-equipment and modernization—has, thanks to the gift which she has received from his Majesty's Government, been placed in the same position in relation to modernisation of her army as great industrial nations of the world.

#### FEDERATION POSTPONED

'I will add only one word more in regard to our Federal preparations. Those preparations as you are aware are well advanced and much labour has been lavished on them in the last three years. Federation remains as before the objective of his Majesty's Government; but you will understand, gentlemen, without any elaborate exposition on my part the compulsion of the present international situation, and the fact that given the necessity for concentrating on the emergency that confronts us we have no choice but to hold in suspense work in connection with preparations for Federation while retaining Federation as our objective. Had we met in more normal times there would have been many other matters to mention to you today,—the position of Indians overseas; various developments of interest and importance which are under consideration in the civil administration; working of provincial autonomy and of the reformed constitution. But as I have already suggested I feel certain that at a time when the struggle which is raging elsewhere is uppermost in our thoughts this is a moment in which that emergency, and matters directly associated with that emergency, must be of predominant and in a sense of almost exclusive

importance. Our trust must be that, under Providence the forces of right and justice will triumph, and that we may be able to take up again those interrupted activities on which we have been engaged for the furtherance of constructive work, of peace and of progress and prosperity of India. (Loud cheers).'

#### PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE COMM. REPORT

After H. E. the Viceroy's address the House resumed discussion on the Pacific Committee's Locomotive report. The House rejected without a division the Muslim League Party's amendment, moved by *Maulvi Abdul Ghani*, to Sir Andrew Clow's motion, expressing the opinion that the purchase of 218 X class Pacific engines during the period 1925-28 without trial being given, "was unwarranted and a huge wastage of public money." *Maulvi Abdul Ghani*, moving his amendment, criticised what he described as the "squandering" of money by the Railway Board in this and other instances notably in the purchase of a large number of cast iron sleepers which later were condemned as unfit for use. Mr. C. C. Miller, in expressing the European Group's opposition to the "sweeping" amendment, stressed the importance of a rigid adherence to the principle of "Safety First" in the purchase of engines for Indian Railways. The Committee, he said, had found that the Railway Board were responsible for the purchase, without extended trial, of a class of locomotives which had proved unsuitable to the Indian track. In coming to this conclusion the Committee had taken into account the dilemma in which the Board had been placed with regard to standardisation and fuel economy, but the committee had nevertheless found that the Board, by their decision to purchase the engines in spite of the strongly expressed advice of the consulting engineers, took a risk. Mr. Miller pleaded that the Government should give effect to the recommendation of the Committee for strengthening the link between the Mechanical Engineer and the Shed Staff and the establishment of a Research and Development Bureau. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi* vigorously criticised the design and the initial and continued purchase of Pacific engines which, he pointed out, continued to be defective, although between 1929 and 1938 no less than twenty major modifications had been tried. The past, however, was past, and they had to discuss the future. He congratulated the Communications Member on taking up the recommendations of the Committee. Mr. *Laichand Navairai* thought that the Committee had virtually found that India had committed a mistake in not having her own factories for the manufacture of engines suited to her conditions. This aspect of the matter had, in his opinion, assumed greater importance, now that the European war might result in cutting off supplies of locomotive parts from abroad. *Sir Ziauddin Ahmed* elaborated this point further, and said that it was now a practical proposition that India must be made self-supporting in the matter of running her railways. If the war continued for a considerable length of time, the railways in India might come to a standstill unless the Railway Board started manufacturing engines in India. And in manufacturing them here, the prime consideration must be safety. Speed was not of great importance just now. Railway Board must no longer follow a policy which, he thought, was similar to that of a man who first purchased a saddle and went about in search of a horse to suit it. (Laughter). *Maulana Zafar Ali* declared that responsibility had not been brought home against the individuals responsible for the continued purchase of the engines in question. The public would never be satisfied until action was taken against those who had played ducks and drakes with public money. Action could easily be taken by the Railway Board in this matter if it applied the same rigid standards of conduct as were applied in the case of a Divisional Traffic Manager who was sacked because he was thought to have wrongly used his power to issue passes. *Sir Andrew Clow*, replying to the debate, referred to the remarks about the manufacture of locomotives in India. There seemed to be an impression that they were now taking up a subject which they could have taken up many years ago. This was not really a recommendation of the Committee. *Sir Andrew* said that the Committee had made certain observations on the making of locomotives. Circumstances, he proceeded, had changed greatly since the proposals were first put forward, particularly the cost of building engines abroad. Moreover, there had been big changes since he moved the motion in the House last week. But what effect these would have on the possible building of locomotives here, he was not prepared to predict. *Sir A. H. Ghaznavi*, the Communications Member said, attributed to the Committee the view that the whole design was unsuitable. If that was so, he (the speaker) should have thought their advice would have been to scrap the lot and start a new design. But the Committee found that the

Pacific Engines design was on the whole justified. Referring to the amendment, which he opposed, Sir Andrew said that so far as the financial aspect was concerned, a very strong justification could be put forward for these engines. The issue was whether these engines should have been purchased or whether engines of any other type should have been purchased in the place of the Pacifics. A much larger number of the obsolete types, they should remember, would have been necessary than the number of the type which was actually purchased. It was not a case of the engines not being needed. The charge might be laid against the Railway Board of the day that they were unduly optimistic in their expectations of traffic, but if they erred in that respect, they erred in good company. He could think of a large number of projects, some non-official, some unfortunately official, in those expansive years, which later on proved to be very far from being gold mines. The Railway Board erred in the company of this House which in 1922 recommended the purchase of engines worth ninety crores of rupees which, he was told, represented about two thousand locomotives. Actually less than half of that number was purchased. Dealing with the question of responsibility for the purchases, Sir Andrew said, "It has always been a very difficult thing to judge one's predecessors. Every man is a fool to his successor (laughter). The sensible things that we do call for no notice in future years, but mistakes we all make become evident to those who have to repair them." For that reason, he had always tried to be tender in forming opinions about those who were past and gone. But the Committee themselves had made it clear that in their opinion there was an error of judgment in neglecting the warning of the consulting engineers and in proceeding with the purchase before trial of so many engines at one time. He felt that in matters of this kind, the Committee, with their knowledge and the close attention they had given to the task, were perhaps in a better position to judge than any member of the House. He was prepared to leave it at that. The amendment was lost, and the House adjourned.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA BILL

14th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly held to-day a general discussion on the Defence of India Bill as reported by the Select Committee. Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah*, Leader of the House, moved for consideration of the Bill, after which Mr. A. C. Dutta and Sir A. H. *Ghannavi* addressed the House. Sir *Yamin Khan*, giving general support to the Bill, urged the Government to agree to the Muslim League Party's amendment to delete the provision that it shall not be necessary to take down the evidence at length in writing during trials before Special Tribunals. That provision, he pointed out, would lead to a conflict of views among judges of the Tribunals. He reiterated the Party's assurance that no obstruction would be caused by them to the passage of the Bill. Mr. N. M. *Joishi* reiterated his contention that the working classes would be the greatest sufferers if the Bill was passed. He had prophesied, he said, that the Ordinance would be used against the working classes. That prophecy had come true. He had learnt that it had been used against the strikers at Digboi. Mr. F. E. *James* said that Mr. A. C. Dutta, Deputy President, was apparently not aware of what happened during the last war. It was a story of unpreparedness, incompetence and muddle. Surely the House did not want the Government of India to repeat that story. He, for his part, was glad that the Government of India had not neglected its duty. The conditions, he proceeded, had vastly changed since the last war and in fighting a totalitarian State, totalitarian methods must be adopted. As for Mr. Dutta's argument that the Bill was one for the Defence of the United Kingdom and the Allies, Mr. *James* observed that the present war was not for the defence of one country or another but was in defence of a principle which was indivisible. Referring to Mr. *Joishi's* opposition to the Bill, Mr. *James* said in peace time a Bill of this description would have met with the European Group's strong opposition but an emergency demanded drastic measures. Furthermore, the Bill conferred powers mostly on Provincial Governments. Mr. *James* protested against Mr. *Joishi's* remarks against the Leader of the European community. That community was the first to volunteer and he assured the House that the members of the community would be the worst sufferers from the war. Giving his support to the Bill, Mr. *James* urged the Government to take the greatest care in framing rules. Dr. *Banerjee* declared that the representatives of the different parties in the House were not satisfied with the provisions of the Bill, firstly, because the Select Committee had acted in too much hurry, having spent only one day on the Bill, and secondly, because the Government had adopted an unbending attitude, as revealed by Sir

Sant Singh in his minute of dissent. Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah*, replying to the debate, said that the provisions of the Bill were undoubtedly drastic but that was in order to meet a situation the like of which had never arisen before. He hoped that those who would be invested with powers under the Bill would use those powers with discretion, humanely and in such a manner as to cause the minimum of inconvenience. (*Mr. L. K. Maistra*: It is only a hope. It is not an assurance.) Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* said that if by assurance was meant a guarantee here and now, it would not be honest to give it. It was undoubtedly the Government's intention and design that these powers should not in any manner be abused (*Cheers*.) Referring to Mr. Datta's criticism, Sir M. Zafrullah asked if it meant that the Government should wait till those circumstances which, according to Mr. Datta, necessitated the Act of 1915, arose before the Government took action to deal with them. He should have thought that the Government deserved approval and praise for their action on this occasion. He reminded Mr. Datta, however, that even on the last occasion, before the Defence of India Act of 1915 was enacted, as many as six Ordinances had been issued to deal with the situation. Mr. Datta seemed to contend that the Government of India could do whatever might be necessary to secure India against direct aggression but the moment they set out to do something to help Great Britain and the Allies, that would be objectionable. Did Mr. Datta suggest that the defeat of Great Britain would have no effect on the defence of India? The House agreed to Sir Mahomed Zafrullah's motion.

The House then took up the consideration of the Bill clause by clause and disposed off 24 out of 74 amendments. All amendments considered to-day related to Clause 2 of the Bill, and were all rejected without division with the exception of one moved by Mr. *Lalchand Navatrar*, which was accepted by the Government. This related to Sub-Clause 2 of Clause 2 which originally provided that the rules made under the Bill may empower any authority or person to make orders. By the amendment the word "person" was deleted and the clause confers power only on "any authority." During discussion of the sub-clause relating to the prevention of false reports without lawful authority or excuse. Dr. *Banerjee* moved an amendment to restrict the provision to reports spread knowing them to be false. The Law Member, Sir *Mohammed Zafrullah*, opposing the amendment, said that he would have the necessary words inserted in the rules to be made under the Bill. The amendment was withdrawn. The House then adjourned.

#### HINDU WOMEN'S DIVORCE BILL

15th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly by 32 votes to 15 rejected this morning Dr. *Udeshmukh's* motion moved at the Delhi session to refer to a select committee his Bill to give Hindu women the right to divorce. When the discussion on the motion was resumed this morning, Mr. *Azhar Ali*, supporting the Bill, asked why a privilege, enjoyed by the women of all other nationalities, should be denied to Hindu women alone. He urged the Government at least to postpone voting on the Bill till the Congress party returned to the House. Mr. J. A. Thorne, Home Member, replying to the debate, made it clear that the attitude of the Government to the Bill as announced by Sir N. N. Sircar in the April session, remained unchanged. Though he was not present in the House in April Mr. Thorne said that he had read the report of the proceedings and had the advantage of listening to the speeches made in the present session. What struck him was that not a single Hindu, with the exception of the mover, supported the Bill. The only support had been from Muslims and the commendation of the people who in no circumstances would be subject to the provisions of the measure was one which could not receive as much consideration as the views of those who would be subject to its provisions. Dr. *Udeshmukh*, Mr. Thorne said, did not profess to talk for the Congress party. He spoke for himself and a number of people who desired to reform the law applying to Hindu marriage. They were therefore entitled to suppose that if the party's views were expressed they would show the same disparity as had been shown in the views collected in the course of the circulation of the Bill in newspapers and in the House. Mr. Thorne claimed that there could be no unfairness in maintaining today the attitude which was so vigorously expressed by the leader of the House in last April. Mr. Thorne held that with this Bill out of the way there was a better chance for a more practicable measure. The Bill achieved a negative result in that they had some indication how it would not proceed and, if reformers who had the matter at heart now got down to produce a serious, considered and comprehensive measure to deal with the subject of right of divorce for



Hindu women, the Government would not in any way be opposed to the principle of such a measure and would examine it as they had examined this Bill strictly on its merits.

#### NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

Four Bills were introduced, three of which were sent for circulation and one referred to a select committee. Two Bills were introduced by Diwan *Lalchand Navulras*. One sought to raise the age of consent to 18 for both males and females, and the other to amend the Press and Registration of Books Act. It sought to control propaganda of a communal nature 'which is generally attributed to an inferior section of the press.' The Bill laid down that no person who had been convicted of offence of moral turpitude, or who has not passed at least matriculation should be permitted to make a declaration nor shall any such person edit a newspaper. The third bill was sponsored by *K. B. Shaikh Fazal-Haq Piracha* who sought to amend the Indian Merchant Shipping Act so as to remove inconvenience caused to pilgrims by inadequate space and lack of individual allotment to pilgrims in ships. *Khan Bahadur Siddique Ali Khan* introduced the fourth bill. It declared that the properties of a Muslim dying intestate without heir devolved upon the Muslim community. The Bill was referred to a select committee. The *Chair*, before putting the motion to vote, said that it was contrary to the established convention to introduce a Bill and refer it to a select committee at the same sitting of the Assembly. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan* said that conventions had been broken several times in the past. *Mr. M. S. Aney*, though opposed to the principle of the Bill, was agreeable to have it referred to a select committee provided it was clearly understood that they would not be committed to the principle of the Bill. He wanted the Government's attitude. *Sir Zafarullah Khan*, Law Member, stated that as explained by *Sir N. N. Sircar* the Government regarded the Bill as ill-conceived, badly drafted and defective. The Bill also dealt with matters which were within the provincial sphere. He regretted that the mover had not taken advantage of the criticisms made by *Sir N. N. Sircar* on *Sir Mohammad Yakub's* Bill but had brought forward an identical bill before the House. He, however, told that the objections raised against the provisions of the Bill would be removed in the select committee and he, therefore, would not oppose the select committee motion. The motion was adopted.

The Deputy President, *Mr. A. C. Datta's* three Bill were sent for circulation. *Mr. Datta's* first Bill sought to amend the Contempt of Courts Act. *Mr. Datta* said that as the law stood one could not speak with confidence as to what constituted contempt of court. He said that his Bill, while preventing interference in the course of the administration of justice, sought to give perfect freedom to the press and to the public in the matter of comments upon judicial decisions. The *Home Member* did not oppose the motion for circulation. He, however, explained that attempts to define contempt of court had been unsuccessfully made in the past. Eminent lawyers like *Sir Chimanlal Setalvad* had advised against defining contempt.

The second Bill of *Mr. Datta* sought to amend the Indian Bar Councils Act. *Mr. Datta* explained that there had not been any improvement in the status of legal practitioners in the subordinate courts. The object of the Bill was to bring about the desired unification and autonomy in the legal profession. *Sir Muhammad Zafulla Khan* did not oppose the motion for circulation. He explained that the Bill sought to place all categories of lawyers on one level, democratise the bar councils and take away the control of High Courts from the legal profession. The Government held that the Bill went too far and further that the subject matter of the Bill fell within the concurrent list. The best course, therefore, was to obtain the views of the provincial Governments, judges of High Courts and the legal profession before the Bill was allowed to progress further. The circulation motion was adopted.

The third Bill sought to amend the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act and give the Hindu daughter the right of inheritance. *Dr. Banerjee* moved that the Bill be circulated. *Mr. Thorne* favoured the motion, but explained that it was too early to judge the effects of the Act which the Bill sought to amend. The Act was passed in 1937 and had already been amended once. Further succession came within the concurrent list and, therefore, the provincial Governments would be given full opportunity to express themselves before the Bill became law. The circulation motion was agreed and the House adjourned till the 18th.

## AUTONOMY FOR BALUCHISTAN

18th. SEPTEMBER :—Mr. *Ghulam Bhik Nairang* moved a resolution recommending immediate steps to establish Provincial Autonomy in Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces. Mr. Nairang said that the major part of Baluchistan was under British Administration and looking at the history of that administration since 1879, when Baluchistan was acquired, one found that it had been dealt with from a strictly military and strategic stand-point. Important as its military and strategic position was, other considerations, declared Mr. Nairang must not be lost sight of. The experience of Provincial Autonomy in the North-West Frontier Province, which like Baluchistan was a Frontier Province, was a point in favour of granting a similar political status to Baluchistan. His own personal experience of Baluchistan showed that the atmosphere there was one of suspicion and mistrust and autocracy in which spies overran the country, education, had made no progress and no public movements could be started. Mr. O. K. Caroe, Foreign Secretary, replying, said that Baluchistan was a land of contrasts and was made up, fairly of British Baluchistan, which was a Chief Commissioner's Province, with a population of a little over one lakh, secondly, what were called 'leased' areas, and thirdly tribal areas. The resolution could only refer to British Baluchistan. It was not easy to his mind to think of establishing an autonomous unit in an area as small as a tehsil in British India. It was difficult to construct modern western representative institutions on the basis of tribal institutions which, at present, existed in British Baluchistan. There was no police in Baluchistan; law and order was maintained by the tribes themselves; crime was not punished in the way it was punished in British India. The revenue administration was based on assessment mostly in kind. The tribes themselves were taken into partnership in running the administration. The Arms Act was not fully enforced. He could not think of election meetings of men with rifles on their shoulders. (Laughter). Was it wise, he asked, to break up the present system and introduce Provincial Autonomy? The resolution was put to vote and negatived by 40 votes to 11. The House then adjourned.

## DEFENCE OF INDIA BILL. (CONTD.)

19th. SEPTEMBER :—The Congress Nationalist Party continued today their fight against the provisions, numbering nearly 50, in clause two of the Defence of India Bill defining offences and penalties regarding which the Central Government is empowered to make rules. The party generally objected to the provisions of the clause on the ground that they were redundant because the ordinary law already contained similar provisions and also that they were excessively severe and went beyond the needs of the situation. Pandit L. K. Maitra moved for the deletion of the provision giving power to prohibit or regulate meetings, assemblies, fairs and processions. Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan, Law Member, intervening explained that in accordance with the settlement arrived at in the select committee the rule made under the sub-section had already been modified so as to make prohibition or regulation applicable only in the interest of public safety, maintenance of law and order and proper prosecution of war. Pandit Maitra contended that even so it was unnecessary because the ordinary law gave ample power to meet these ends. Mr. A. C. Datta and Sardar Sant Singh supported the mover pointing out that some provincial Governments were already using the provision to stop processions and meetings though there was no disorder in the country. The amendment was lost by 45 to 9 votes, the Muslim League Party remaining neutral.

Prof. Banerji moved for the omission of the provision empowering forfeiture of any property in respect of which contravention of rules is made or attempted or abetted. He maintained that seizure and detention of such property provided for on the sub-clause was sufficient. Forfeiture would be excessive even for the prosecution of war. Sir Mahomed Zafrullah explained that the provision would apply not to property required for the prosecution of war but to property in respect of which an offence under the rules had been committed. The amendment was lost.

The Congress Nationalists next attempted to remove the death penalty provided in clause 5 for contravention of any provisions of section two with intent to wage war against the King or to assist a State at war with his Majesty. Prof. Banerji moved an amendment and Sir Mahomed Zafrullah opposed it. Sardar Sant Singh supporting the amendment said that waging war

against the King was an offence against which the Penal Code had already made a provision. The death penalty for contravention of rules was, in his opinion, not a penalty which emergency tribunals, in view of the summary character of proceedings and the atmosphere of emergency, could be expected to award after weighing all the issues calmly. Mr. M. S. Aney further elaborated the point and emphasized that no accused could have a proper trial before an emergency tribunal. The amendment was rejected by 42 to 9 votes.

The provisions relating to special tribunals, their constitution and jurisdiction were strongly attacked by the party. An attempt was made to remove the power to include in the personnel of these tribunals magistrates of different grades. The main objection raised against these officers was that they were generally regarded as dependent upon the executive Government for their career and promotion and their inclusion in tribunals would only mean substitution of rules of the executive for the rule of law. Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan, replying, pointed out that the objection raised were misconceived. Firstly, the constitution of special tribunals was in the hands of provincial Government. If provincial Governments were convinced, proceeded Sir Mahomed Zafrullah, that the ordinary machinery of law was adequate to deal with the situation there was no reason why special tribunals should be appointed by provincial Governments at all. Nor was it obligatory on provincial Governments to refer every offence for trial to these special tribunals. Furthermore, if there were no tribunals perhaps 90 per cent. of the offences under the Bill would, in the first instance, be tried by a single magistrate whereas special tribunals would consist of three, of whom at least one would be qualified to be a High Court judge. The Nationalist Party's amendments to this chapter of the Bill were negatived.

The House agreed to the amendment moved by Sir Yamin Khan to the effect that in case of trials by special tribunals for offences punishable with death or transportation for life evidence shall be taken down at length in writing. The Bill originally provided that only summary evidence shall be taken down in all cases. The discussion on the Bill clause by clause had not concluded when the House adjourned till the next day, the 20th. September, when continuing their lone stand against the Bill the Congress Nationalist party made a strong demand for the right of appeal against all sentences passed by special tribunals. Sardar Sant Singh, Mr. Aney and Diwan Lalchand Navalrai dwelt on the salutary check which, they said, the recognition of the right of appeal would exercise in emergency tribunals. Mr. Aney referred to the fact that the Government had on the select committee accepted the principle of the right of appeal against sentences of death and transportation. The Government, he said, had now only to extend the principle further and agree to concede at least the right of revision if they could not concede the right of appeal. Sir Zafrullah Khan, opposing, referred to the saying that justice delayed was justice denied. After safeguards such as provision for the appointment of special tribunals of at least one person qualified to be a High Court judge had been included, the right of appeal would not improve matters, but would only prevent speedy justice.

The House rejected by 43 votes to 8, Pandit L. K. Maistra's amendment to lay down that the provisions of the Cr. P. C. regarding appeals shall apply to cases before special tribunals. The Congress Nationalists secured support from other non-official members in their attempt to extend the right of appeal to persons sentenced to imprisonment upto ten years by special tribunals for such heinous offences as waging war against the King or assistance to enemies specified in Clause 5 of the Bill. An amendment with this object was moved by Diwan Lalchand Navalrai, but Sir Zafrullah Khan pointed out that in terms of the amendment as such, if passed, an appeal would lie against all sentences upto ten years, not merely sentences upto ten years for heinous offences referred to above.

Sir H. P. Mody, Mr. Aney and Sir Yamin Khan supported the object of the amendment and urged the Government to suggest a proper form which would be free from the defect pointed out by the Law Member. Mr. Aney contended that an appeal against conviction on such charges was made not because the length of the sentence was too great, but because the accused wanted to clear his character. Eventually the House allowed the clause to stand over, pending further consideration by the Government.

After lunch on the motion of Sir George Spencer, Secretary, Legislative Department, the following agreed amendment was passed:—

"A person sentenced by a special tribunal (a) to death or transportation for life, (b) to imprisonment for a term extending ten years under section 5 of this Act, or under sub-section (4) of section 5 of the Indian Official Secrets Act of 1923 as amended by section 6 of this Act shall have a right to appeal."

The House also passed a compromise amendment providing that section 1 of this Act shall come into force at once and the remaining provisions of the Act shall come into force in such areas on such date, or dates, as the Central Government may by a notification in the official *Gazette* appoint.

Moving for the third reading of the Bill Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah Khan* referred to the improvements made both by the select committee and later by the House. He gave an assurance that it was not intended to use every one of the powers with which the Central Government and the provincial Governments were proposed to be invested until a contingency called for such use. Though power was given to provincial Governments to set up special tribunals it was not the intention of the Central Government and he was sure that provincial Governments would take the same view that special tribunals must not be set up as a matter of course. Tribunals need only be set up when the ordinary judicial machinery in provinces proved inadequate to deal with the contingency.

Sir *H. P. Mody*, after congratulating the leader of the House on the spirit of accommodation he had shown, said that it was noteworthy that barring certain apprehensions about the scope and provisions the country as a whole had accepted the principle underlying the Bill. That he thought because in this country, more than in most other countries, a passionate sympathy was felt for all the oppressed nations. He hoped that in carrying out many purposes of the Act various committees would be set up and officials would be given power under the Act to try to invite cooperation of the people and not proceed by the method of compulsion. He hoped also that no measure of importance would be undertaken for the exploitation of the country's resources in industrial and commercial fields without consulting the interests concerned.

*Sardar Sant Singh* criticized the drastic powers given by the Bill and said that the opposition of his party was based on the apprehension that these powers would be abused as the powers under the Defence of India Act of 1915 were abused. He hoped that Government would give an assurance that instructions would be issued as to the proper application of its provisions and that the Government would also realise that their responsibility was great in proportion to the wide powers taken under the Bill.

Sir *Yamin Khan* asked the Government to be careful that whenever they wanted to arrest public leaders they should not send a dozen machineguns. (Laughter.) That would be quite unnecessary. He agreed that this was the time to give Indians every possible benefit and prevent profiteering and exploitation of labour.

Mr. *Akman*, giving the support of the European group to the motion, trusted that the powers conferred on the Central and Provincial Governments would be exercised by officers administering rules with tact, discretion and commonsense. He supported Sir *H. P. Mody's* plea that in matters concerning industrial and commercial interests industrial and commercial communities should be consulted.

Mr. *Aney* said that his objections to the Bill were, firstly, that it repeated the outstanding defects of the Act of 1915, secondly, that the new Act encroached in certain respects, upon the exclusive jurisdiction of provincial Governments and thirdly, that by this Bill the House was delegating wide powers to unknown persons to make and carry out rules. He wanted to know whether the provincial Governments had been consulted.

Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah Khan*, replying, referred to Mr. *Aney's* anxiety about consultation with the provincial Governments. Mr. *Aney* seemed to think that consultation would have provided a safeguard. If that was so there was a much bigger safeguard contained in the Bill. Almost entirely the administration of the Bill after it became law would be in the hands of the provincial Governments and he hoped that it would be some consolation to Mr. *Aney*. Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* gave an assurance that the powers given by the Bill would be exercised with tact, discretion and commonsense. Replying to the suggestion that in sponsoring the Bill he had abdicated his functions in favour of somebody else, Sir *Mahomed Zafrullah* assured the House that in every respect in which he had been in charge of the Bill he had exercised his discretion wherever he was convinced that it was necessary. The House passed the third reading of the Bill and then adjourned.

## INDIAN AIR FORCE RESERVE

**21st. SEPTEMBER** :—Details of the proposed Indian Air Force Volunteer Reserve were given by Mr. Ogilvie, Defence Secretary, to-day, when he moved consideration of the Bill to provide for the discipline of the members of the Force. The proposal to form the Reserve Force had long been under consideration, said Mr. Ogilvie, but the lack of finance had been the wherewithal to purchase aeroplanes. The object of the Reserve was to provide a force which, in time of peace,—or when peace shall come again—would be similar to the Indian Territorial Forces, that is to say, it was designed to cater for civilian personnel who were skilled either in aviation or in the technical maintenance of aircraft, who would do their training in spare time and be called up periodically for intensive training. In time of war, they would be embodied and of course when the enrolment of the proposed Reserve which was shortly to begin was completed, they would at once be embodied for actual service for the period of war. During war time, Mr. Ogilvie said, members of the Reserve would be paid the same rates as the officers and airmen of the Indian Air Force. During peace—and it was perhaps looking rather a long way away to talk about peace now—they would be paid a small retaining fee, a uniform allowance and full pay when called up for their period of training. The units would be Indian but there would be provision for seconding officers and airmen of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in order that the skilled services of such men might not be lost. At present they would be designed for coastal duties and the units would, therefore, be recruited from flying and technical personnel living in or near the great ports. There would also be a unit stationed at Delhi. It was believed that this Reserve would be popular, to judge from the number of applications to join it which had already been received. In time of war, it would undoubtedly be a valuable asset to the country's defence, and generally in time of peace, it would improve civil aviation by affording opportunities for persons to become expert in flying advanced types of machines and technical personnel would gain the practice of their own trade and learn the care and maintenance of aircraft. Mr. F. E. James welcomed the Bill heartily but expressed regret that it took the outbreak of war to usher it. He then put a series of questions to which Mr. Ogilvie replied as follows :—Firstly, with regard to machines, there was, he understood, no idea at present of commandeering machines belonging to Flying Clubs. The pilots would be trained on the Royal Air Force machines and they would be sent to training camps for the purpose. Secondly, all Indians, including statutory Indians, would be eligible for recruitment or for commissions. *Sardar Sant Singh* asked whether pilots already trained in the Aero Clubs would be eligible under the Bill. Mr. Ogilvie said that anyone who already had knowledge of flying would certainly be preferred to those who had not. Thirdly, Mr. Ogilvie observed, as regards Europeans, it was proposed, as he had already said, to second European members of the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve for service with them. The only other way in which Europeans could obtain service in units was by joining the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve which they could now do in this country for service with the Royal Air Force squadrons. The same also applied to Indian officers who, apart from these Reserve units, might be granted temporary commissions in the Indian Air Force proper. The Air Force, however, was small and there might not for some time be any considerable number of vacancies in it. Full provision had been made for the continued training of these units and experienced fighting and technical personnel from both the Royal Air Force would be seconded to them. Finally, as regards the strength of this Reserve, said Mr. Ogilvie, it would amount to five units at present and it would depend not only upon the number of persons who volunteered or wished to volunteer for this service but also upon the number of service machines which might be made available. The Bill was passed.

## OTHER BILLS PASSED

The House passed the Bill to amend the Motor Vehicles Act, the Bill further to amend the Insurance Act, and the Bill further to amend the Indian Oaths Act as reported by the Select Committee, and referred to Select Committee the Bill to provide for the registration and more effective protection of trade marks.

## WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION AMEND. BILL

**22nd. SEPTEMBER** :—The Assembly's sitting to-day, which was expected to be brief, was unexpectedly prolonged by an interesting development in which the nominated members, perhaps for the first time, left the Assembly and played a

decisive part while the official members remained neutral. The only Bill before the House was Sir *Ramaswami Mudaliar's* Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act. Sir *Ramaswami* explained that the Bill in a sense was a war measure and complementary to the Act passed on September 3 by British Parliament known as the Personal Injuries (Emergency Provisions) Act under which the Indian seamen, who received injuries on ships engaged in foreign travel and who now ran war risks, were to be compensated by the State. The Bill sought to lay down that to the extent to which Indian seamen were compensated by the State under these circumstances the employers should be relieved of liability under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Some Indian seamen, added Sir *Ramaswami Mudaliar*, had already lost their lives or had been injured in war risk areas and he was sure the House would like to convey its profound sympathy to the bereaved. The Bill would have a retrospective effect as far as these seamen were concerned. Sir *Raza Ali*, moving for the reference of the Bill to a select committee with instructions to report by Sept. 25, said that the members had no relevant material such as the British Act and added that if the Government opposed the motion and with their superior numbers defeated it, an impression would be produced in the country that the Government took advantage of the 'misguided' action of the Congress members in absenting themselves. Sir *Ramaswami Mudaliar* remarked that it was rather hard on the Government to be taxed with taking advantage of the absence of certain members when the Government was actually consulting the House. In view of the urgency of the matter he had two alternatives : to bring the Bill before the House with the hope that it would co-operate and pass it quickly, or to advise the Governor-General to issue an Ordinance. He had taken the first alternative ; if a large section of the House insisted, he would not oppose the reference of the Bill to a select committee. But that would inevitably involve delay, perhaps until January. Therefore he would have to advise his Excellency to issue an Ordinance to cover the period till the Bill became law. Sir *Yamin Khan* supported reference to a select committee and said that while giving full credit to the mover for sympathy for Indian seamen and personally satisfied with the terms of the compensation scheme, the members of Opposition benches had also to satisfy themselves on many points, such as if the present war conditions did not involve double risk on Indian seamen and if they were not entitled to double compensation. (Laughter.) Mr. *F. E. James* asked if the seamen injured in a ship within the Indian territorial waters, were entitled to compensation. Sir *Ramaswami* replied in the affirmative. Mr. *J. D. Boyle* expressed his group's preference for rule by legislation. Therefore he favoured speedy passing of the Bill. Mr. *M. S. Aney* asked if, when the House had seized the subject, the Governor-General could constitutionally issue an Ordinance. Mr. *F. E. James* asked what would be the position of Indian seamen serving in neutral ports. Sir *Ramaswami* said that he was advised that there was no difficulty in the way of issuing an Ordinance notwithstanding the Bill before the House. He added that the Bill did not deal with neutral ships, nor did the Workmen's Compensation Act which it designed to amend. He reiterated the assurance that the scheme of compensation under the British Act would not be less generous than the existing one. Sir *Raza Ali's* amendment was pressed to a division and lost by 15 to 13 votes. Only the Muslim Leaguers voted for it, the European nominated members voted against and the officials and Congress Nationalists remained neutral. The House rejected a number of amendments by Sir *Raza Ali*. On the third reading, Sir *Raza Ali* said that the Government owed an explanation to the House why the Bill had not been brought before the House until yesterday. He should not congratulate the Government on their heroic attitude on his amendment to refer the Bill to a select committee. As for nominated members he said that they had played hyena to the European Group tiger and the Government lion. (Laughter.) Sir *Ramaswami Mudaliar*, replying, confessed to being mystified by the heat which Sir *Raza Ali* had engendered on the Bill when the speaker had hoped that he would have unanimous approval. Answering Sir *Raza Ali's* question he stated that the Bill could not have been brought earlier for the simple reason that the Act passed by Parliament was not received till two days ago and a cable correspondence then followed in order that he might satisfy himself with regard to the provisions complementary to the Bill before the House. He did not know how the attitude of the Government was open to objection. He made it clear what the alternatives were. Did Sir *Raza Ali* want the Government to vote for reference to a select committee and thereby vote for Ordinance rule instead of the ordinary rule of law ? (Cheers.) The House passed the third reading of the Bill and then adjourned *sine die*.

# The Bengal Legislative Assembly

Budget Session—Calcutta—6th. July to 13th. July 1939

## CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT BILL

There was a very large attendance of members when the Bengal Legislative Assembly reassembled at Calcutta on the 6th. July 1939 after a week's recess to deal with the two amendments made by the Upper House to the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill. On the motion of the *Nawab Bahadur of Dacca*, Minister for Local Self-Government, who had piloted the Bill in the Assembly, the House agreed to take into consideration the amendments made to the Bill by the Upper House. Mr. *Charles Griffiths* (Anglo-Indian) moved an amendment suggesting that eight councillors of the Calcutta Corporation be appointed by the Provincial Government, of whom three shall be members of the scheduled caste community and one an Anglo-Indian. The Bill, as passed by the Assembly, provided that eight councillors of the Corporation shall be appointed by the Government of whom three shall be members of the scheduled caste community. The Upper House, by an amendment, had suggested that the number of councillors to be appointed by the Government be reduced from eight to four and that the provision for reserving three seats to be filled by nomination by the Government from members of the scheduled caste community be dropped. The debate on Mr. *Charles Griffiths'* and other amendments was continued on the next day, the 7th. July when more than forty-eight amendments to the change made by the Upper House in the Bill reducing the number of nominated seats from eight to four, were moved by the Opposition. On behalf of the Government, the hon. *Nawab Bahadur of Dacca*, Minister for Local Self-Government, moved an amendment seeking to restore the original provision of the Bill, namely, that eight councillors shall be appointed by the Government, three of whom shall be members of the Scheduled Caste Community. The Opposition proposed various ways as to how the four nominated seats, as suggested by the Council, should be distributed, and urged further reduction in the number of nominated seats. Opposition speakers launched a vigorous attack on the system of nomination to Municipal and local bodies. The amendments were under consideration when the Assembly adjourned till Monday the 10th. July when, on the motion of the *Nawab Bahadur of Dacca*, Minister for Local Self-Government, it rejected the amendment made by the Upper House to the Bill, and stuck to its previous decision. In the Bill, as passed by the Assembly, it was provided that the Government shall nominate eight councillors of the Calcutta Corporation, of whom three shall be members of the Scheduled Caste community. The Upper House, by an amendment, had reduced the number of councillors to be nominated by the Government from eight to four, and had also done away with the provision reserving three of the nominated seats for the Scheduled Caste community. A Krihak Praja Party amendment seeking to reduce the number of nominated members to two—one Hindu and one Muslim—was rejected by 116 to 64 votes. An amendment moved by a Scheduled Caste member of the Congress Party, urging that of the four members to be nominated by the Government as suggested by the Upper House, three shall be members of the Scheduled Caste community, was rejected by 116 to 76 votes. This decision of the Assembly was communicated to the Upper House, which met on the next day.

## HUNGER STRIKE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

11th. JULY :—After two hours' heated debate to-day the Congress Party's adjournment motion on the hunger-strike of political prisoners in the Dum Dum Central

Most of the time of the House on the opening day was taken up by an adjournment motion moved by Dr. *Nalinakshya Sanyal* (Congress) to discuss the situation created by the action of the Magistrate in prohibiting protection work at Kurigram town (Rangpur) against the erosion caused by floods in Dhara river. The adjournment motion was lost by 11 votes to 76, after nearly two hours' debate. During the debate certain remarks were made which created a good deal of heat and commotion in the House. The proceedings of the House in relation to these remarks were later referred to the Privileges Committee by the hon. Speaker and the Press was asked not to mention it in detail.

Jail was rejected by 116 to 81 votes. The Congress Party, the Krishak Praja Party, the Independent Scheduled Caste Party and some members of the Hindu Nationalist Party voted for the European Group and a member of the Hindu Nationalist Party voted against the motion. The Maharaja of Mymensingh remained neutral. Moving the adjournment motion Mr. *Harendranath Choudhury* (Congress) said that he was voicing the public regret—the regret of the man in the street—that politicals were still rotting in the jails of this province. He recalled Mahatma Gandhi's negotiation with the Bengal Government in this connection, and said that Mahatma Gandhi understood the Government's position to be that there would not remain a single political prisoner in jail after April 13, 1939. Either Mahatma Gandhi did not understand the Government position or the latter did not understand Mahatma Gandhi's position. Proceeding, Mr. Choudhury said that the Government stood committed to a policy of release, and the public had a right to know why that policy had not been fully implemented by now. He recalled that the question of release of political prisoners had found a place, a prominent place, in the election programme of most parties, including the Ministerialists. But they found now that forty per cent of the youths were still rotting in jail. He said that the prisoners had gone on hunger-strike, being driven to a state of despair. Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, ex-Minister and Leader of the Krishak Praja Party, in supporting the motion, said that a large number of political prisoners had been released. But he thought that this policy of releasing the prisoners in dribblets had not been a wise policy. The question of release of political prisoners was not a party question. It was not a matter to be trifled with. These prisoners were not thieves, dacoits or robbers. They had been struggling for the freedom of their country. One might not agree with their methods. But hundreds and thousands of them had gone to jail to see that the people of this country were able to breathe the air of freedom, just like Englishman in England, and Germans in Germany (laughter from European benches). Mr. Ahmed turned to the European benches and said that this was not a matter to laugh at (cries of "shame, shame" from the Opposition benches). Concluding, he appealed to the Ministry to grasp this opportunity and release the prisoners as early as possible. Mr. *Profulla Kumar Ganguly*, ex-State prisoner, in his maiden speech, demanded as a matter of right that political prisoners should be set at liberty. Speaking on behalf of the European Group, Mr. *Curtis Miller* said that some of these prisoners were convicted and sentenced for acts of violence and added that these were not certainly acts of patriotism. He said that the release of prisoners was a matter where serious principles were involved and where every single case required special consideration on its own merit. He thought that the very liberal policy which had been adopted by the Government and the immense care which had been bestowed on this question by the Government commanded the sympathy of the House and of the public. Mr. *Sarat Chandra Bose*, Leader of the Opposition, supporting the adjournment motion, repudiated the charges made against him personally by the Home Minister of breach of confidence in relation to the proceedings of the Advisory Committee. Mr. Bose maintained that no ban had been imposed by the decision of the Committee on any member, far less, on a member who had resigned his membership from explaining to the public why he had done so. He denied the charge of dilatoriness levelled against the Congress Party in selecting its representatives. On the contrary, he charged the Government with dilatoriness in announcing the personnel of the Committee. Mr. Bose said that nobody denied that these prisoners were guilty under this or that section of the Indian Penal Code. But the question was, whether the time was not ripe to release these prisoners whose only crime had been that their country's freedom had been the dream of their life. He asked the House to remember that the real motive of their crime was love of country. Replying to an interjection by a member of the Coalition Party, that these people were 'murderers', Mr. Bose asked if anyone would maintain to-day that Michael Collins, Kemal Pasha and De Valera were murderers. These prisoners, he said, had abjured the path of violence, and they should now be set at liberty to be of service to the nation. Replying to the debate, Sir *Nasimuddin*, Home Minister, said that in pursuance of their policy, they had already released more than three thousand detainees and a large number of political prisoners. The Government had appointed an Advisory Committee to go into the question of the release of convicted political prisoners. He would tell the House that, excepting in eight cases, where some restrictions had been imposed by the Government, in not a single case recommended and considered by the Government, had the latter failed to give



effect to the suggestions of the Committee. The Home Minister denied that love of country was the motive of the crimes of these terrorist prisoners. The Home Minister thought that the prisoners were actuated by motives of gain, retaliation, etc., and therefore no claim for preferential treatment could be maintained on their behalf. If motive was to be the consideration for the release of any class of prisoners, those convicted for crimes perpetrated on grounds of religious faith might claim the same privilege. The Government were not prepared to agree to the principle of releasing prisoners on the mere ground of their motives. The Home Minister, proceeding, said that there was absolutely no justification for the hunger-strike. He would reiterate the Government's position that no Government could ever agree to yield to threats. The Home Minister held that the publication of the correspondence between the Leader of the Opposition and Mahatma Gandhi and the withdrawal of the Congress members from the Advisory Committee had precipitated the hunger-strike.

### Congress Party and the Advisory Committee

#### SIR NAZIMUDDIN'S STATEMENT

The hon. Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, in his statement in the Assembly on the 7th July, said :—

"On the 25th of September, 1938, the Government of Bengal announced their policy in regard to the release of terrorist convicts, and in particular made it clear that, for reasons recorded, they were not prepared to subscribe to a policy of indiscriminate release. The Government announced that they would release certain categories of prisoners on their own initiative, which they have already done, and that with regard to the remainder, they would appoint a committee to advise the Government on the exercise of clemency in their cases, the final decision in each case remaining with the Government.

"The statement issued by Mr. Gandhi, and the correspondence which passed between the Home Minister and Mr. Gandhi, which has been published by the Government made two other points clear, namely, that the Government were not prepared to set a time-limit within which the prisoners were to be released, and, secondly, that the Government intended to undertake the release of prisoners on their own responsibility and not on the basis of assurances given by prisoners to Mr. Gandhi and communicated by him to the Government. As Mr. Gandhi himself stated, the interviews which he was allowed to have with the prisoners were for his own satisfaction only.

"The Committee appointed by the Government was so constituted as to give representation to all shades of opinion in the Legislature, and indeed was composed of members of the Legislature with the exception of the President, a retired High Court Judge, and one official.

"In accordance with this policy, the Congress Party in the Legislature were asked to nominate representatives and Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and Mr. Lalit Mohan Das were nominated. The invitation to the Congress Party was issued on the 26th September 1938, and it was, after a considerable interval, that is to say, on the 23rd October, that a reply was sent nominating Mr. Bose and Mr. Das. In that reply, Mr. Bose said that the Government were well aware that the Congress Party could not identify itself or agree with the Government's policy in respect of political prisoners. But as the policy of the Government had been set forth in a communique of September 25, that is to say, the day prior to the issue of the invitation to Mr. Bose, the latter could have been under no misapprehension as to what the Government's policy was, and as to the purpose for which the Committee had been appointed, namely, to consider individual cases on their merits and advise Government accordingly.

"The Committee began its sittings in December 1938, and although its deliberations have had to be frequently interrupted or postponed, more often than not to suit the convenience of the Congress members, it has examined all but twenty and made recommendations to the Government in 184 cases.

"As soon as the recommendations of the Committee were received by the Government, they have been taken into consideration and dealt with as rapidly as possible. In 146 cases, prisoners have been released as recommended by the Committee. Thirty-eight recommendations are still under consideration by the Government. In no case has the recommendation of the Committee been definitely turned down.

"In the case of two prisoners, who are suspected tubercular subjects, the Government considered it necessary to impose certain conditions. In another case, where a prisoner was recommended for release on medical grounds, it was found necessary, while the Committee were considering the case, to send him to hospital to undergo an operation. A successful operation for appendicitis was performed, and the prisoner is now convalescent. As the diagnosis on which the Committee made their recommendation has been modified as a result of the operation, the case has been referred back to them for further consideration. In another case, a prisoner's mental condition came into question, and on receiving the recommendation of the Committee, the Government had the prisoner examined by an expert. He recommended certain treatment, which has been carried out. The prisoner is about to be examined again before the Government pass orders on this case. Finally, in one case the Government had to refer the recommendation of the Committee back to them for further consideration. After interviewing the prisoner the Committee repeated their recommendation. It has been accepted by the Government and the prisoner has been released.

"At the first meeting of the Committee it was agreed by all the members that their proceedings should be regarded as confidential and that statements, if any, should be made with the authority of the President, if possible, after consulting the Committee as a whole. The publication, therefore, of the correspondence purporting to have passed between Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose and Mr. Gandhi, in which reference is made to the proceedings of the Committee in certain cases and to the attitude of individual members, is a breach of confidence. It is the publication of this correspondence which has led the prisoners in the Alipore and Dum Dum Central Jails to come to totally unjustified conclusions regarding the relations between the Government and the Committee. As described above, both the Government and the Committee have proceeded steadily and consistently to play their respective parts in respect of the policy announced in September last year. The deliberations of the Committee are not complete. The Government are not yet in possession of all their recommendations. Until the Committee's recommendations have been received and considered, the Government naturally are not in a position to come to any final decision in the case of any individual prisoner. Other than the letter of resignation, the Government have received no communication either from Mr. Bose or Mr. Gandhi. They were not given copies of the correspondence, nor were they informed of the correspondence or of the intention to make it public.

"Mr. Bose, in submitting the resignations of himself and Mr. Das, stated that the reason for the resignations was, that their approach to the question of release of the convicted prisoners differed fundamentally from that of most of the other members of the Committee. In informing the President of the Committee that they had resigned, Mr. Bose expressed gratitude for the consideration with which he and his colleagues had been treated. The conclusion, therefore, is that it was no failure on the part of the Government to implement their policy that led to the resignations. The plain fact is that Mr. Bose failed in an endeavour to make the Committee as a whole agree to the immediate unconditional release of every case placed before them. There has been and can be no question of an alteration in the policy of the Government or of failure of the Government to implement that policy, nor has there been on the part of the Committee any failure to allow the representatives of the Congress Party the fullest opportunity and latitude to represent their particular views. The Government, however, were anxious that Mr. Bose's defection should not leave the Congress Party unrepresented on the Committee, and they accordingly at once wrote and enquired whether the Party desired to nominate representatives to replace Mr. Bose and Mr. Das. In reply, the Government were informed that as Mr. Bose's views could not be harmonized with those of the Committee, and as the Party accepted Mr. Bose's views, there could be no possibility of any other member or members participating in the proceedings of the Committee. This disposes of the suggestion that they should be reinvited to join the Committee.

"As I have already said, the Government have appointed to advise them a Committee of representatives of the different parties in the Legislature. Their policy and the composition of the Committee have been before the public for many months. At the time of the Budget and on innumerable other occasions during a lengthy session, opportunities have occurred for challenging this policy or for demonstrating that it was not in accordance with the wishes of the Legislature, to which the Ministry is responsible. On no single occasion, however, has it, for one

moment, been questioned in the Legislature. The assertion, which has sometimes been made, that the attitude of the Government in this matter is undemocratic or not in accordance with the wishes of the people is belied by those facts. On the contrary, it is demonstrable that not only have the Government approached the general problem in a conciliatory spirit, but they have been careful to associate with them, at every stage, members of the Legislature, including those, whose views they knew, were not identical with their own."

#### RULES FOR CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

12th. JULY :—The Assembly had a brief sitting to-day. The House approved, without any discussion, the draft rules of procedure for the conduct of business of the Assembly, as presented by the Committee appointed by the House. Under the new rules, every Friday in a session will be set apart for non-official business, provided, in the opinion of the *Speaker*, there is no urgent Government business. Another change made is that non-official Bills which cannot be introduced for want of time before the expiry of a session, will remain pending for the next session, without lapsing as now. A third change effected is that discussions on certain non-official resolutions may be objected to by a minister on grounds of being detrimental to the public interest, provided such objections is upheld by the *Speaker*. Consideration of rules recommended by the Committee, affecting the discharge of the Governor's duties under the Government of India Act, 1935, has been kept in abeyance, the *Speaker* having undertaken to consult legal opinion on the constitutional points involved. The rules adopted by the Assembly to-day will come into force from the next session of the Assembly.

Mr. *Ashraf Ali*, Deputy Speaker, introduced the Privileges Bill which will come up for consideration in the next session of the Assembly.

The hon. Mr. *Mukunda Behari Mullick* presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Amendment) Bill, 1939.

13th. JULY :—The budget session of the Assembly, the longest on record in the history of Indian legislatures, was prorogued after an honr's sitting this evening. The Assembly had 76 sittings during the session, which commenced on February 18 last.

The *Secretary* read a message from the Secretary of the Bengal Council stating that the Council had agreed to the Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1939, as passed by the Assembly.

The *Speaker* announced that the Committee of Privileges had decided to drop the matter referred to it by Mr. *Abdur Rahaman Siddiqui* (Coalition) in view of the fact that a member of the Assembly who was expected to give material evidence in the matter was dead. Since the matter had been dropped by the Privileges Committee, it was only fair, the *Speaker* remarked, that he should state that no blame attached to Mr. *Siddiqui*.

The question whether members of legislatures in India enjoy any privilege ensuring them freedom of movement, particularly in their respective constituencies, was next raised by means of a privilege motion by Dr. *Nalinakshaya Sanyal* (Congress). Dr. *Sanyal* moved : "This Assembly is of opinion that the Government should take the necessary steps to ensure freedom of movement of members of the legislature in the province of Bengal especially in their respective constituencies." On the motion of Sir *Nasimuddin*, Home Minister, Dr. *Sanyal's* motion was referred to the Privileges Committee of the House. The House was then prorogued.

### Winter Session—Calcutta—27th. Nov. to 20th. Dec 1939

#### AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS AMENDMENT BILL

The Winter session of the Assembly commenced at Calcutta on the 27th. November 1939 with the hon. *Khan Bahadur M. Anwar Huj*, *Speaker*, in the chair. The hon. Mr. *Mukunda Behari Mullick*, Minister in charge of the Co-operative Department, presented the report of the Select Committee on the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Amendment Bill, 1939, and moved that the Bill, as amended, be taken into consideration. Three motions from the Congress benches for recommitment of the Bill to a Select Committee were rejected without a division and the House agreed to take the measure into consideration. The Assembly was discussing certain clauses of the Bill when it adjourned.

#### ADV. MOTION—BANK OF MEETINGS

After a short question hour, *Roy Harendra Nath Chowdhury* (Congress)

wanted leave of the House to move an adjournment motion to discuss the situation that had arisen in the province on account of the prohibition of public meetings, processions, or gatherings by the Government notification of September 5 last issued under the Defence of India Rules. The Home Minister, *Sir Nazimuddin*, objected to the motion being admitted. The *Speaker* said that he was not quite sure whether the motion was in order, particularly so far as its framing was concerned. He discussed the matter with the Home Minister and the mover in his chamber in the evening and found that the motion was in order. The debate was accordingly held on the next day, the 28th. November, when the motion was rejected by 120 votes to 80. The motion was supported by the Congress Party, the Krishak Proja Party, the Independent Scheduled Caste Party and some members of the Hindu Nationalist Party, while the Oppositionists included the Coalition Ministerialist Party, the European Group and some independent Hindu members. The mover of the motion, *Rai Harendranath Chowdhury* referred to the assurance given by *Sir Zafrulla Khan* in the Central Assembly, when introducing the Defence of India Bill, that the power which it conferred on the Central and Provincial Governments would be employed only when a contingency justified and called for their use. The member added that within forty-eight hours of the promulgation of the Defence of India Rules, the Bengal Government had issued this notification without announcing any reason. He charged the Bengal Government with breach of faith with the public. He anticipated that the European members of the Assembly would support the Government and oppose the motion, but he challenged the European members to point out a single case in respect of any of the Acts or regulations in force in England where public meetings and processions were prohibited. Were they to understand, he asked, that Bengal was nearer the theatre of war than England? Nearly a dozen speakers participated in the discussion of the motion. *Dr. Suresh Bannarjee* (Congress Labour) complained that the promulgation of the notification had resulted in stifling trade union activities. *Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookherjee* (Independent Hindu) referred to the alleged oppression of Hindus in some parts of the province and he requested the hon. Mr. Huq to accompany him on a tour of those districts where these serious allegations had been made and to enquire into them. Mr. Mookherjee criticised the rigour of press censorship in Bengal and alleged that the censorship was one-sided in some instances. The hon. Mr. A. K. *Fazlul Huq* said that he would like to tell his friend *Dr. Mookherjee*, that he would have to go with Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to various places, not in Bengal but outside it, in connection with the challenge that Mr. Nehru had accepted. If *Dr. Mookherjee* had seriously made that challenge, let him arrange a programme. If he (Mr. Huq) could not himself go, he would ask somebody on his behalf to accompany where *Dr. Mookherjee* wanted to hold an enquiry. Speaking on the adjournment motion on behalf of the Government, the hon. *Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin*, Home Minister, said that, so far as he and his Muslim colleagues in the Cabinet were concerned, the position was, that until and unless the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League gave a definite mandate and called upon them to resign, they had to carry out the duties of their office conscientiously and honestly. And in pursuance of that policy, they had been carrying on their duties in a manner which they considered to be right. *Sir Nazimuddin* explained that the notification had been issued under the Defence of India Rules. The three main objects of the rules were these: Firstly, during the war there should be no action or activities which might tend to create a feeling of hostility towards the Government or cause an impression to grow among the public that they should not assist in the war. Anything designed to create propaganda against war had to be prevented. Secondly, during war time, there should necessarily be a certain amount of curtailment of civic rights and liberties. They would have to take steps to prevent any disturbance in the province. And thirdly, it was their duty to see that communal differences and communal questions were not accentuated, leading ultimately to a breach of the peace. In the application of these rules, the Bengal Government had taken great care to see that absolute freedom and absolute liberty was ensured to the people so far as criticism of the Bengal Government's policy, programme or actions were concerned. He declared that no restrictions had been placed on any body who desired to criticise the activities of the Government or its policy and wanted to create public opinion with a view to replacing this Government by another. He challenged anyone to cite one single instance to show that action had been taken against any one under these rules for criticising the Government's policy and activities.

## AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS AMEND. BILL

**29th. NOVEMBER** :—The proceedings in the House to-day when the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Amendment Bill was dealt with, were free from excitement. The House disposed of more than a dozen clauses of the Bill to-day. Non-official amendments were rejected. Only one amendment, moved on behalf of the Ministerial Party, was accepted by the Minister in charge of the Bill.

## CONTROL OF JUTE PRODUCTION

**30th NOVEMBER** :—After nearly two hours' debate, the Assembly to-night, by 97 against 64 votes rejected an amendment moved by Mr. *Abu Hossain Sarkar* (Krishak Proja) to the Bengal Jute Regulation Bill, 1939, urging that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 1st of April. The Congress Party voted in favour of the amendment along with the Krishak Proja Party and the European Members present voted against it. The Bill was introduced by the hon. Mr. *Tamizuddin Khan*, Minister for Agriculture, who also moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of eleven members with instruction to submit their report by December 8. One other amendment, moved on behalf of the Congress Party by Dr. *Nalinaksha Sanyal* for circulation of the Bill, was negatived without a division. The Government motion for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee was accepted by the House without a division. The Bill provides, in the first place, for the making of a record of the land upon which every individual grower cultivates jute in any given year. It further provides that the Government may, before the sowing season of any year commences, declare, after due consideration of the position at the time regarding the supply and demand for jute and all matters pertinent thereto, that the area upon which the next crop may be sown, shall be regulated and also declare the extent of that regulation. Thereupon on the basis of the prepared record, allotment will be made to the individual grower through the agency of local committees of specific areas, upon which new licences for the cultivation of jute will be permitted for the season about to commence. In this manner, it is proposed to control the supply of raw jute and to adjust, as far as possible, the anticipated demand for the year in question.

## ADI-GANGA IMPROVEMENT BILL

**1st. DECEMBER** :—Non-official Bills were considered in the Assembly today. A large number of Bills were introduced, most of which were circulated for eliciting public opinion. Mr. *P. Banerjee* introduced the Adi Ganga Improvement Bill, the object of which was to resuscitate the river, the water of which, the mover said, had become stagnant and polluted. The Hon. *Maharaja of Coosimbazar*, in moving that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion, said that the Government had already spent considerable sum of money on the project. But on such a measure he should like to consult public opinion. The motion for circulation was carried.

## POLITICAL PRISONERS' CLASSIFICATION BILL

Mr. *J. C. Gupta* introduced the Political Prisoners' Classification Bill, the object of which was to provide facilities for the political prisoners in jail and to enable them to become useful members of society after their release. It was desirable, stated the statement of objects and reasons, that political prisoners should be segregated from the ordinary criminals. The classification of prisoners in three divisions according to social status and standards of living had presented many difficulties so far as political prisoners were concerned. In numerous cases the classification had been arbitrary and unsatisfactory. It was, therefore, considered necessary that political prisoners should be brought together under one class and more humane treatment should be ensured in jail so that they might not be shattered in health and mind as unfortunately had been the case with many political prisoners. Mr. Gupta urged for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee. He said that if the provisions of the Bill were accepted, this would give great relief to the Home Minister and the lot of difficulties that were experienced owing to the unsatisfactory conditions in the jails could be avoided. The motion for circulation was carried by 81 to 42 votes.

## ANTI-THUMB IMPRESSION BILL

*Khan Bahadur Mohammed Ali* introduced the Anti-thumb Impression Bill which aimed at prohibiting thumb impression and making it compulsory for persons between the age of 18 and 55 to write their names in any language current in the province. The measure was likely, in the opinion of the mover, to give an impetus

to literacy and the Government might take advantage of it to give it a more effective turn. The Bill was circulated for eliciting public opinion.

#### PUBLIC MISDEMEANOUR BILL

Dr. *Nalinaksha Sanyal* introduced the Public Misdemeanour Bill, the aim of which was to make the misuse of powers by people holding public office punishable. This, said Dr. Sanyal, was not provided for in the Government of India Act, 1935. The necessity for such a measure, said the mover, had been emphasised by the proceedings of election tribunals and other courts.

#### COURT OF WARDS AMEND. BILL

Mr. *Abu Hossain Sarcar* introduced the Bengal Court of Wards (Amendment) Bill. It was circulated for eliciting public opinion after defeating the motion of the mover that it be sent to a Select Committee. The House divided on it. The motion for circulation was carried by 106 to 57 votes.

#### OTHER BILLS

Mr. *Aftab Hossain Joardar* introduced the *Bengal Marriage Dowry Bill*, Mr. *Mirza Abdul Hafiz*, the *Legal Practitioners' Bill* and Mr. *H. N. Roy Chowdhury*, the *Bengal Prohibition Bill*. The last two bills were circulated for eliciting public opinion. The House then adjourned till Tuesday next the 5th. Dec.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS INTRODUCED

5th. & 6th. DECEMBER :—The Assembly had a short session to-day, having sat for only about an hour, the business being the consideration of three official bills. Two amending bills were sent to the Select Committee and the other was introduced, there being no discussion on them. All these Bills were moved by the Hon. *Nawab Musharraf Hossain*. The *Official Trustees (Bengal Amendment) Bill* and the *Administrator-General's (Bengal Amendment) Bill*, which were referred to select committees, aimed at permitting suitable fractional audit of account of estates in place of cent per cent audit, which the present law required, as it involved unnecessary expenditure. The *Bengal General Clauses (Amendment) Bill*, which was introduced, sought to make provision for certain amendments which were necessitated by the passing of the Government of India Act. The Bills also aimed at establishing beyond doubt that the repeal of an amending act does not affect the continuance of the amendments made by it and enables a large number of Acts which were confined to making textual amendments in previous acts to be repealed. Next day, the 6th. December, the House met in expectation of a big debate over the consideration of the *Bengal Official Records Bill* but this did not come off on account of Hon. Mr. *A. K. Fazlul Haq*, Premier, who was in charge of the Bill, himself proposing that the Bill be re-circulated for eliciting public opinion. The Premier said that the reason for this was that the response to the invitation for opinion from the public had been very poor. Therefore he was prepared to re-circulate the Bill for eliciting public opinion. The House agreeing to it, there was no further business and the House rose within a few minutes of the disposal of the question.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES

7th. DECEMBER :—The preparation of a record of the land on which jute was grown this year, recently undertaken by the Bengal Government in order to regulate the growing of jute, would, it was estimated, cost Rs. 7,15,000. This was revealed in the supplementary Budget Estimates for the year 1939-40 presented this evening by the hon. Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarker*, Finance Minister. The total supplementary demand is for Rs. 62,19,000 under five heads. These include Rs. 6,74,000 under the head, "Famine Relief owing to distress caused by floods and drought", and Rs. 47,50,000 under the head "Loans and advances by Provincial Government." In connection with the last demand, it was pointed out that the budget contained a provision of Rs. 5 lakhs under the head 'Advances to cultivators'. To meet the situation arising out of floods and droughts, allotments had already been made to District Officers totalling Rs. 87,00,000 and it was estimated that the requirements for the remainder of the year would be about Rs. 2 lakhs.

#### THE BENGAL FISHERIES BILL

8th. DECEMBER :—The Assembly disposed in quick succession today the whole list of non-official Bills. There was only one division demanded but there too the Government amendment for re-circulating the bill was carried by an overwhelming majority. The Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1937, was introduced by Mr. *Narindra Nath*

*Gupta*. By way of an amendment, the Hon. Sir *B. P. Singh Roy* moved that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 31st July, 1940. The amendment was carried.

#### TRANSFER OF PROPERTY AMEND. BILL

Mr. *Surendra Mohan Moitra* introduced a bill—the Transfer of Property (Bengal Amendment) Act, 1938, in order to help tenants occupying non-agricultural lands with houses and constructions thereon from being evicted by landlords taking advantage of section 100 of Transfer of Property Act. Sir *B. P. Singh Roy* admitted the necessity of such an enactment but pointed the complicated nature of it. Nevertheless Sir *Bijoy* thanked Mr. *Moitra* for bringing the Bill before the House and expressed the hope that it would be possible for the Government to introduce a legislation to that effect in future. He moved that Mr. *Moitra's* Bill be circulated for eliciting opinion thereon by 31st March, 1940. On the same ground the Hon. Minister moved for re-circulation of the Bengal Non-agricultural Tenancy Bill, 1939, introduced by Mr. *Nishith Nath Kundu*.

#### JUTE FUTURES ORDINANCE

After disposing the non-official Bills the House began discussing the Bengal Ordinances relating to Jute. Mr. *Bankim Mukherjee* moved the first resolution disapproving the Bengal Raw Jute Futures Ordinance, 1930, (Bengal Ordinance No. 1 of 1939) as promulgated by the Governor of Bengal under section 88 (1) of the Government of India Act, 1935. Mr. *Mukherjee* began by saying that the Ordinance itself was annoying but it could be tolerated if it was meant to help the poor and the helpless. So far the present Ordinance was concerned it was introduced at a time when the majority of agriculturists had already sold out their jute, secondly the minimum price that it fixed was even below the amount that an average agriculturist was expected to spend for producing jute in his land. He had no objection to the present Ordinance as such; on the other hand he welcomed it but hoped that the Government would see their way in raising the minimum price of jute to a higher figure namely Rs. 50 in normal times and over 100 during war time. *Maulvi Abdul Waheb Bokanagari* condemned the Ordinance which was issued, said he, at a time when most of the produce of the agriculturists was sold. The advantage, if it was at all obtainable, was obtained by the middlemen and the richer sections of the agriculturists who could hold their produce. As regards the minimum price fixed by the Ordinance, said Mr. *Bokanagari*, it was ludicrously small. When the *Krishak Praja Party* demanded by a resolution that the minimum price of jute should be fixed at Rs. 10 the Government turned it down on the ground that it could not be fixed unless the Governments of Assam and Bihar were consulted. But in the present instance it was clearly apparent that a minimum price could be fixed by the Government of Bengal alone although the price fixed was abnormally low than what they demanded the Government to fix formerly. He warned the Government to immediately raise the minimum price of jute as otherwise they would have to face a very difficult mass of agriculturists who could no longer be duped by high sounding phrases which they had no intention to fulfil. The discussion on the Ordinance was then adjourned.

#### ALLEGED ASSAULT ON UNDER-TRIAL

11th. DECEMBER :—Mr. *J. C. Gupta*, Chief whip of the Congress Party, sought the permission of the Speaker to-day to move an adjournment motion to discuss the alleged ill-treatment and assault upon an under-trial prisoner, *Nripendra Chandra Chakraborty*, a Sub-Editor of a daily newspaper, while in the custody of the police between December 2 and 4, 1939. Sir *Nasimuddin*, Home Minister, said that the point was that an allegation of this character had been made before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, who had examined *Nripendra Chandra Chakraborty* and found no marks of assault upon him. The Chief Presidency Magistrate had sent *Chakraborty* to the jail custody, and this was not on record there. The Home Minister believed the Magistrate to have said that the prisoner could consult his lawyer about it. There was no proof that this was done and he felt that there must be something definitely established before the thing could be discussed in the House. If the court had recorded that such a thing had happened or the man had brought a case and proved it, then there would be some justification for the adjournment motion. Mr. *J. C. Gupta*, said that the Home Minister had very innocently suggested a course which, if taken up by the party concerned, would not have necessitated this motion being moved in this House. The whole matter was this :

Chakraborti was arrested without any warrant, he was taken to the police lock-up and there he was confined and on the first opportunity that he got after production before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, he complained that he had been assaulted. He showed marks of injury, and his complaint was noted by the Chief Presidency Magistrate. The Chief Presidency Magistrate had not, however, made any enquiry and also had not taken any cognizance of that. Therefore, herein they demanded an enquiry into this matter. They had expected the Home Minister, after getting notice of this motion, would at least be able to apprise the House as to what actually were the facts of the case under the Defence of India Rules. The *Speaker*, however, disallowed the motion. The Assembly then passed without any cut the entire supplementary budget estimates of Rs. 61,51,000 of the Government for the year 1939-40 and then adjourned.

#### BENGAL TENANCY AMEND. BILL

**12th. DECEMBER :—**The Bengal Tenancy (Third Amendment) Bill, 1939, was passed by the Assembly to-day. The Bill had an easy passage. One of the main provisions of the amending bill is that every form of mortgage in which possession is delivered to the mortgagee shall be deemed to be satisfied by possession for 15 years. It will include mortgage by conditional sale and anomalous mortgages. The other important provision is that the decree for arrears of rent will be realised by the sale of the tenure or holding in respect of which decrees are obtained. They will not be realised by the attachment of other movables or immovable properties. Mr. *Dhirendra Nath Dutta* (Congress) moved an amendment to this which was to the effect that the decrees for the arrears of rent should be realised not by the sale of the entire tenure or holding but by that portion of the tenure or holding which the court considered sufficient to satisfy the decretal dues. The amendment was opposed by the Hon'ble Sir *Bijoy Prasad Sinha Roy*, the Minister-in-Charge of the bill. The amendment being pressed to a division was lost by 63 to 108 votes. There was another provision in the bill that for the sale of a holding or tenure in execution of a decree for arrears of rent when the decree-holder applied for delivery of possession, notices should be simultaneously issued prohibiting judgment-debtors to remain in possession of the properties sold. If after the issue of such notices the judgment-debtor did remain in possession it was provided he would be criminally liable. To this an amendment was proposed on behalf of the Congress party by Mr. *Nikunja Behary Maity*, Mr. *Dhirendra Nath Dutta* and others for the cancellation of the clause. Sir *B. P. Sinha Roy* agreed to it and he also gave notice of an amendment for the cancellation of the clause. The clause was cancelled. The amending bill as settled in the Assembly was passed. The House then adjourned.

#### THE WAR RESOLUTION

**13th. to 18th. DECEMBER :—**With a full attendance of members and the galleries crowded, the Assembly took up for discussion this evening the Government resolution on the war. The following is the text :—

"This Assembly dissociates itself from the aggressive and ruthless methods pursued by totalitarian Governments in Europe and declares its complete sympathy with the British Government for taking up arms against Nazi Germany in the defence of democracy and of the right of self-determination of the smaller and weaker nations which are now at the mercy of a few powerful and aggressive dictator-ridden states and cannot, unaided, maintain their territorial integrity.

"This Assembly, therefore, authorises the Government to assure the Government of India full co-operation in the successful prosecution of the war.

"This Assembly further authorises the Government to convey to His Majesty's Government that in consonance with the aims of the present war, as declared by that Government, and understood by India and consistent with the accepted ideal of the British Empire as a Commonwealth of free nations, the attainment by India of the status of a Dominion as defined in the Statute of Westminster which is the declared policy of the British Government, should be implemented immediately on the termination of the war and the New Constitution formulated should provide sufficient and effective safeguards for the recognised minorities and interests and should be based upon their full consent and approval."

In moving the resolution, Mr. *A. K. Fazlul Huq*, Prime Minister, appealed to the House to discuss the question without passion or prejudice so that the result of that discussion might lead them to a decision which would be honourable to themselves and conducive to the good of the Province. The resolution, Mr. Huq continued, naturally divided itself into three parts. The first part presented no



difficulty because they were more or less agreed that the methods adopted by Hitler and his associates desired the domination of the whole civilised world. So far as the position of Great Britain was concerned, they all knew how the British Prime Minister had tried his utmost to avoid a conflict. "I hope, I can say without fear that the ideals for which Great Britain is fighting are ideals which it would not be difficult for anybody to accept", said the Prime Minister. Great Britain was not fighting for aggression, nor for the maintenance of her own interests, but was fighting in defence of those fundamental principles, the maintenance of which was vital to the civilised world. Dealing with the second part of his resolution, Mr. Fazlul Huq explained why he was moving the resolution at the moment although the Muslim League, of which he was a member, had not yet finally declared that the Muslims of India should offer co-operation to Britain. In the first place, besides being a member of the League, he happened to be connected with a provincial administration and it was time that the Government of Bengal declared their policy. And as a member of a Provincial Government which was a unit of the British Government, he could not possibly see that there was any other course but to declare most emphatically that they should co-operate with the British Government, and to request his colleagues in the House to take up that attitude towards the war. If, however, at any time, it so happened that the President of the League declared that the Muslims of India ought not to co-operate with Great Britain, and thus there was a conflict with regard to his position as a member of the Cabinet and as a member of the League, he would allow the claim of the League to prevail (cheers from the Coalition Ministerialist Party benches). Speaking on the amendment that had been tabled on behalf of the Opposition, the Prime Minister said that there was no question of India having been made a participant in the war between Germany and England. All that had been done was that immediately after the promulgation of the war or perhaps a few days before the war had been declared, troops from India had been despatched to certain strategic positions. In doing so, the Government of India had taken measures for the protection of India herself. And as regards the question of consultation with the people of India, he was sure that they would realise that military measures could not be undertaken by means of a plebiscite. The decision must be swift and no one could for a moment contend that the decision with regard to military measures should be taken after consultation. (On the question of promulgation of Ordinances the Prime Minister pointed out that it was absolutely necessary that the Government of India should have taken powers to give direction to all Provincial Governments in order to meet the requirements of the situation. Mr. Huq then referred to the obstacles in the way of India attaining the fullest measure of political liberty and freedom. There was no escape from the fact that the various communities in India were divided in a manner which was almost unparalleled in any other country in the world. He did not believe there was any force in the contention that the Hindu-Muslim differences were the creation of the Europeans. It was not the Europeans who divided them; it was the Indians themselves who created the division, and that was why the Europeans ruled them. The differences between the Hindus and the Muslims were there. They had to admit that. Mr. Huq claimed that the Muslims were as much Indians as others. They had a distinct religion, a distinct culture, to which they were passionately attached, and which for no consideration whatsoever they could afford to forget. He maintained that it was the view of every Muslim (cheers from the Coalition benches and ironical cheers from the Opposition benches) and that no Muslim was prepared to forego his distinctive culture, his religion or political identity in order to attain some unimportant temporal power. Referring to the future constitution of India, Mr. Huq pointed out that they had instances in which the question of a Constituent Assembly had been considered by other countries which had Dominion Status and whose constitution had been drafted by a Constituent Assembly. He cited the cases of Australia, Canada and South Africa and said in all those three countries, there was homogeneity of race, homogeneity of language and homogeneity of culture which did not exist in India. Even in spite of this homogeneity, in all these three countries they had to experience great difficulties. He asked the House to realise what tremendous difficulties they would have to face in India if they tried to build up a constitution on the basis of a Constituent Assembly. The Muslims and other minorities would never be prepared to give up what they had been able to secure after years of strenuous endeavour. (Cheers from the Coalition benches). The Congress had not been able to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the communal problem. "Why should we

go to England", concluded Mr. Huq, "to ask for independence? Independence was not given to any one by anybody. Independence has to be fought for (ironical cheers from the opposition benches). Independence cannot be got by mere application and supplication".

Mr. *Sarat Chandra Bose* then moved the Congress Party's amendment while four Scheduled Caste members moved four amendments to the official resolution. The amendment moved by Mr. Bose asked the Assembly to associate itself with the world-wide abhorrence of the aggressive and ruthless methods pursued by imperialistic and totalitarian Governments in and outside Europe and declared its complete sympathy with the oppressed and weaker nations. The amendment regretted that the British Government had made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India. The amendment asked the Assembly further "to recommend to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to seek the co-operation of the Indian people that the principles of democracy, with adequate safeguards for the preservation of the rights and interests of all minorities, be applied to India and her policy be guided by her own people and that India should be recognised as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to the present governance of India." Mr. Bose observed that the Prime Minister had stated in his resolution that they condemned the oppressive and ruthless methods pursued by totalitarian governments but Mr. Bose was somewhat surprised to find that he had omitted to make any mention of the word imperialism. He wanted to emphasise that to them, Indians, India meant much more than the Empire or the so-called Empire. They in India were determined to protect and purify their own homes, they wanted to make the lives of their fellow-Indians worth living. As regards the remarks made by Mr. Huq about the difficulty in building up a constitution for India on the basis of a Constituent Assembly, Mr. Bose pointed out that the experiment of a Constituent Assembly had proved successful in South Africa, Canada and Australia despite the difficulties present there. If that experiment had succeeded in those countries, he failed to understand why it should not succeed in India. Mr. Bose told the Prime Minister that the Statute of Westminster contained no reference to India. India had been made a participant in the war without her consent and measures had been adopted for curtailing the powers of Provincial Governments. He could understand co-operation between equals. But he could not understand co-operation between a master and a bond-slave. Mr. Bose failed to understand why it was not possible to consult India when the Dominions could be consulted in the matter.

Explaining the European point of view, Mr. *W. C. Wordsworth* emphasised that public opinion in the whole world was that England and France were acting justly and rightly. Next day, the 14th. December, after nearly three hours' discussion, in which about a dozen members participated, the debate was again adjourned at a quarter to nine till Monday next. Three more amendments were moved to-day by Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* (Independent Hindu), Mr. *Abdul Hakim* (Coalition) and Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, Leader of *Krishak Proja Party*.

Mr. *Abdul Rahaman Siddiqi* (Coalition) did not move the amendment standing in his name in view of the observations made yesterday by the Prime Minister that "in case the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, of which he was a member, decided against extending co-operation to the British Government in the prosecution of the war, he (Mr. Fazlul Huq) will not remain for a single moment in the Cabinet".

The amendment moved by Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* suggested that in order to make co-operation in the prosecution of the war possible and effective, the Government should take immediate steps to enable the Bengalees to participate in the defence of their Motherland; to convey to the British Government the necessity for an immediate and unequivocal declaration that consistently with the avowed aims of the present war, the principles of democracy and freedom would be applied to India unreservedly, her right to become a free and independent country would be recognised and as an immediate step towards the attainment of such independence, full Dominion Status as implemented by the Statute of Westminster, would be conferred on India at the end of the war; and to convey to the British Government that steps should forthwith be taken for the removal of the disabilities and

iniquities on the Hindus who formed a minority in Bengal and specially to secure the revision of the so-called Communal Award.

Moving his amendment, Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, Leader of the *Krishak Proja Party*, said that communal differences should not be put forward as an excuse for not guaranteeing the political advancement of India. He would like to say that despite the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, Nationalist India, Nationalist Hindus and Muslims were determined to march shoulder to shoulder along the path leading to freedom. The House at this stage adjourned till the 18th. December, when the resolution was carried by 142 against 82 votes. The hon. Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarker*, Finance Minister, was the only member of the House to remain neutral. All the amendments moved to the resolution were rejected without a division. During the debate on the resolution, the hon. Mr. Sarker made a statement. Mr. Sarker explained that the minorities would, under the resolution, have the right of vetoing the political progress of the country. This was a proposition with which he could never agree. He was for providing safeguards for the legitimate rights and interests of the minorities in the future constitution, but he could not agree to the minorities being given the power to hold up the political progress of the country.

When the Assembly met at 4 p.m. Mr. Sarker was absent, as also the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. *Sarat Chandra Bose*, and the House proceeded immediately to discuss the resolution. No questions were put. Giving his wholehearted support to the resolution, Sir *B. P. Sinha Roy*, Revenue Minister, observed, "Personally, I feel that our offer of co-operation to Great Britain in the prosecution of this war should be unconditional, because if England wins, we survive and if England loses we go down. Our future is linked up with that of England."

When the House had proceeded for about half an hour, Mr. Sarker entered the Chamber. Mr. Sarker, who spoke, dealt in detail with each part of the war resolution. "In view of past experiences and other considerations, the Congress is perhaps not without justification in taking up its present attitude," he said. He emphasised that while the demand for a declaration of Britain's war aims as a condition precedent to the extension of support was a question on which there could, he believed, be some difference of opinion, he felt that there should be no equivocation about their attitude towards the clash of political ideologies involved in the present struggle. India must also align herself on the side of civilisation and democracy. Mr. Sarker continued that there was no disagreement in India that the country's goal was Dominion Status. This goal had also been admitted by the British Government. With the realisation of this aim, he visualised a condition where "the relations between Great Britain and India will be raised to a plane in which the highest considerations of common goodwill will alone prevail." Mr. Sarker dealt finally with the question of the procedure to be adopted in the framing of the future constitution. It was upon this point, he explained, that he could not agree with his colleagues in all respects. As regards safeguards for minorities, the Minister emphasised that "when it becomes a question of investing a minority with the power to veto all proposals for political advancement, the situation obviously becomes untenable, and one which I could not acquiesce in." The resolution before the House, he pointed out, required the future constitution to be 'based upon the full consent and approval' of the minorities. This was a negation of the fundamental principle of democracy. Mr. Sarker added that he sincerely felt that every possible effort should be made to reach an agreement at least among the major communities. But he would emphasise that, should an amicable settlement prove impossible, it was the largest common measure of agreement, with sufficient protection for minority rights, that should determine the character of their future constitution. This part of Mr. Sarker's speech was greeted with shouts of "hear, hear" and cries of "shame, shame" from the Opposition and the Coalition benches, respectively. Mr. Sarker concluded with the remark that he had given close and anxious consideration to his responsibilities in relation to his colleagues as much as to the far-reaching issues involved in the resolution.

After the Minister's statement, the *Speaker* adjourned the House for fifteen minutes. On leaving the Chamber, Mr. Sarker was congratulated by several members of the Opposition. Participating in the debate Mr. *Nawab Ali*, ex-minister, characterised the third part of the Government resolution as the ugliest part of it. He thought that there was no real communal problem among

the masses. But this problem, according to him, had been manufactured by the henchmen of British imperialism to perpetuate their hold on India. Mr. Nausher Ali was continuing his speech after the time limit had expired, when the Speaker warned him, but he flared up and remarked: "The Government is gagging us outside the House and you, Mr. Speaker, are gagging us inside it." The Speaker took strong exception to this reflection on the Chair and asked Mr. Nausher Ali to withdraw his observations, failing which he would ask the House to consider the position. This, Mr. Nausher Ali declined to do even at the risk of expulsion. The Speaker then said that he did not want that the course of an important debate like this should be diverted by an extraneous incident, and he would later consider what action he might take against Mr. Nausher Ali for his remarks. Mr. W. A. Walker, Leader of the European Group, expressed the support of his party to the Government resolution.

Mr. T. C. Goswami (Congress) emphatically repudiated the assertion that there was a spirit of bargaining in the commercial sense of the term in India's demanding an assurance about her political status. India, he pointed out, wanted this assurance from Great Britain so that she might be able to take an effective part in the prosecution of the war. Mr. Goswami pointed out that they did not want to ignore the minorities. They however knew that minorities were sometimes manufactured and created. He would like to tell the House that if India was given an opportunity to meet in a Constituent Assembly, it was perfectly certain that, in spite of initial troubles and difficulties created by themselves, they would come to a conclusion which would be satisfactory to India and also helpful to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The speech of the Chief Minister, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq in winding up the debate, came to an abrupt end, following an exciting scene. At the outset, Mr. Huq regretted the discordant note raised by the Finance Minister over an important resolution like this. Mr. Sarker had raised the question whether, if the minorities did not agree on the future constitution, they should be allowed to hold up the political progress of the country. "I say most emphatically," declared Mr. Huq, "that if any such contingency arises and if the minorities do not accept a constitution framed for India, a constitution, which the minorities do not consider sufficient for their protection, in that case the political progress of the country must be held up till the majority recognises its duties to the minorities" (applauses from Coalition benches). Proceeding, Mr. Huq said that it was a fundamental fact that, so far as India was concerned, if a constitution was framed which did not meet with the approval of the Muslims and other minority communities, there would be "an open revolt and rebellion" and that if such a constitution was promulgated, the Chief Minister would be the first "to revolt." There were interruptions from Congress benches, whereupon Mr. Huq remarked that no amount of interruption would change the political atmosphere in India, nor would they make ninety millions of Muslims owe allegiance to the Indian National Congress. Proceeding, the Chief Minister said that it was the majority, the Indian National Congress, that had stood in the way of India's political progress. "They are a selfish lot. They are dishonest." The last portion of the Chief Minister's speech evoked a storm of protest from the Congress benches, and there were uproarious scenes. Several members of the Opposition stood up and shouted for the withdrawal of the remark, while some of the Coalitionists also rose in their seats and asked the Chief Minister to continue. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, Leader of the Opposition, enquired from the Speaker if the Leader of the House was in order in charging the Congress with dishonesty. The Speaker said that he would look up the official report of the proceedings and see if the Chief Minister had said anything unparliamentary. A voice: "Why not do it now?" Mr. Bose: With reference to the Chief Minister's remark, I would like to say this. If any person, however highly placed he might be, convicted a whole community, he ended by convicting himself. The Chief Minister resumed his speech, but there was again continued interruption and demand for the withdrawal of his remark, in the midst of which he abruptly ended his speech and took his seat. The House then adjourned.

#### EDUCATION IN BENGAL

15th. DECEMBER :—Owing to the absence of the Prime Minister, who was in charge of the Education portfolio, the proceedings had to be adjourned for a while this afternoon when the House was discussing a non-official resolution dealing with educational matters. *Rat Harendra Nath Chowdhury's* resolution urged "that

general or nondenominational primary schools be immediately started in those areas where, for want of such schools, Hindu students were being compelled to read in 'muktabs'. The mover severely criticised what he described as the "muktabisation" of primary schools in Bengal. His contention was that owing to the neglect of primary schools and expansion of "muktaba" at the sacrifice of nondenominational primary schools, many Hindu students were being compelled to read in "muktaba" with Muslim students. Quoting official figures, he said that even in places predominantly inhabited by Hindus, Hindu students, in the absence of general primary schools, were being forced to receive their training in these 'muktaba'. Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* pointed out that in such 'muktaba' Hindu boys and girls had to read text-books which could not be acceptable to them. He appealed to the Prime Minister, not as a representative of any particular community, but as the Minister in charge of Education of the province, to give an assurance to the House that he would go into the question thoroughly and remove all the grievances of the Hindus at the earliest opportunity. Replying, the Prime Minister regretted that this matter should have been brought before the House by means of a resolution. It would have been better if the mover had met him privately and had drawn his attention to the grievances. He felt that the more they discussed such subjects on the floor of the House, the more would it appear to the people outside that they could not advance one single step even in the matter of education without raising communal issues. He gave the House the assurance that he would look closely into the question in an impartial spirit, and he hoped that within a very short time, the mover and the people of his way of thinking would find that there was no cause for further complaint. Mr. *Sarat Chandra Bose*, Leader of the Opposition, suggested that a conference of representatives of the House should be convened by the Prime Minister to go into the question thoroughly. The Prime Minister gladly accepted Mr. Bose's suggestion. The resolution was then withdrawn.

#### JUTE REGULATION BILL POSTPONED

19th, DECEMBER :—When the Assembly met this evening, the hon. Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarker*, Finance Minister, who had tendered his resignation, was seen occupying his usual seat on the Treasury Benches. The Finance Minister moved for the sanction of excess grants for 1937-38 as recommended by the Committee on Public Accounts, to which the House agreed.

The Hon. Mr. *Tamisuiddin Khan*, Minister in charge of Agriculture, announced the decision of the Government to proceed with the Bengal Jute Regulation Bill in the current session and told the House that the Bill would be taken up for consideration at the next session. He emphasised that it did not mean that the Government had in any way deviated from the policy which they had already announced in regard to jute cultivation in Bengal. "The Government are unflinching in their determination," he said, "to finish the preparation of the record of lands under the jute cultivation in 1939, which is now being carried on." The Minister added that the question whether the 1940 jute crop should be regulated or not, was still under consideration and a decision would have to be taken on this question very soon. The Opposition registered its protest against the postponement of consideration of the Bill. The House then adjourned.

#### MR. SARKAR'S RESIGNATION

20th, DECEMBER :—Immediately after question hour to-day, Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarker*, the late Finance Minister, made a statement on the circumstances leading to his resignation. Mr. Sarker took his seat to-day amongst the independent members who generally vote with the Opposition. After reiterating his view on the clause concerning minorities in the official war resolution, Mr. Sarker said that, although this had proved the breaking point with the Government, he might "freely confess that events have been so shaping themselves during the last six months or so that I was gradually losing heart in my work". He explained that he had entered the Cabinet inspired by the ideal that he could, with advantage, devote such energy and ability as he possessed to the service of the country, and to the improvement of its social and economic conditions. He had also hoped that, if Hindus and Muslims would join hands to work for the amelioration of the economic condition of the masses, which was an end common to almost all communities, "the communal emphasis in our political life might be gradually toned down and communal harmony allowed to prevail in the place of the present tension and bitterness." "I am glad to acknowledge", Mr. Sarker continued, "that during the first year or so, the Cabinet worked harmoniously and was inspired by a desire to

bring about a real improvement in the condition of the masses. But since then, and particularly during the last six months or so, a significant change has come over the outlook of the Cabinet as well as in the relations between the Cabinet and the party, with the result that I have had shortly to abandon the hopes I had once cherished. "In the political sphere, a communal outlook has unfortunately been gathering force in the country at large, whose repercussions have also been felt in this province. Even in the administrative sphere, the former feeling of comradeship no longer obtains. Further, the Cabinet has also gradually lost its leadership to the party. The Cabinet has lost its initiative. The party has become supreme, with the result that cool deliberation and mature judgment possible in a Council of Ministers have yielded place to the rashness and selfish predilections of a large party, which is predominantly communal in complexion and is still obsessed by the power which the ballot-box has given it. "In view of these developments, it had become clear to me that sooner or later I should have to prepare myself for the parting of the ways. "There appears to be a feeling among some Muslim members of the Coalition Party that I have either held up or thwarted the progress of the proposals made for the advancement of their community. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have always endeavoured to further the cause of their advancement. The record of my official work will bear unassailable testimony to refute the charge of any lukewarmness in my attitude towards their interests. "There is one fact which my experience in the administration over a period of two and a half years has revealed, and to which I should like to make a passing reference. I have found that under the prevailing conditions the running of an administration depends more on the strength of votes than on ability, talent or efficiency. There is, therefore, no possibility of doing any real work unless there is a homogeneous and strong party behind one. And the impossible task of attempting to do anything in a Coalition Government with a party hostile to one-self would be easily understandable." Mr. Sarker concluded with an appeal to his Muslim brethren. "They are in charge of the administration of a highly cultured and progressive province. Bengal has a rich history behind it, a history of which all Bengalis, irrespective of their communal complexion, should be proud. Let our Muslim brethren, therefore, act in a spirit that will enhance the glory of Bengal and will entitle them to be considered by the civilised world as worthy of the legacy they have inherited."

The House then passed the *Bengal Agricultural Debtors' (Amendment) Bill, 1939*, and was *prorogued*.

## The Bengal Legislative Council

July Session—Calcutta—7th. July to 14th. July 1939

### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

The July session of the Bengal Legislative Council commenced at Calcutta on the 7th. July 1939. Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerjee (Congress) wanted leave of the House to move an adjournment motion to discuss "the situation created by the Government in suddenly stopping the protective works on the river Dharla at Kurigram and preventing the completion of the same even by private individuals at their own expense through the issue of orders by the District Magistrate of Rangpur." The hon. Maharaja Sri Chandra Nundy of Cosimbazar, Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department, objected to the motion being moved but the President ruled it to be in order. In making the adjournment motion, Dr. Mookerjee urged the Government to respond to the appeal for help from the distant town of Kurigram. He told the House that a sum of Rs. 85,000 had been provided in the budget for protective work at Kurigram; the work had been more than half done, and a sum of Rs. 48,000 had already been spent on the work, when suddenly the work was abandoned. Dr. Mookerjee wanted to know why Rs. 48,000 of public money had been wasted in this way. Secondly, he wanted to know why the Government should interfere with protective work by private individuals when they themselves could not do the work. The motion

was rejected by the House without a division. It might be mentioned that the subject had been raised by means of an adjournment motion on the floor of the Assembly yesterday. The Council then adjourned till July 11 next.

#### DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE

11th. to 12th. July :—The Council discussed this morning the draft rules of procedure for the conduct of business of the House, as presented by the Committee appointed by the Council. In the course of discussion on Rule 12 of the draft rules prescribing limitations on a debate, several members expressed the view that the House should have the right to criticise the public conduct and the administrative action of the Governor-General or any Governor. This view was urged by means of amendments moved by Dr. *Radhakumud Mukherjee* and Mr. *Narashnath Mukherjee* of the Congress Party. Rule 12 laid down, inter alia, that a member while speaking might not "reflect upon the conduct" of the Governor-General or any Governor. The amendments wanted to insert the word "personal" before the word "conduct". The movers of the amendments and their supporters held that they might not criticise the personal conduct of the Governor, but the members should have the right to criticise the public conduct and any administrative action of the Governor who was the head of the Executive Government of the Province, the Ministers being merely his advisers. The amendments were lost and the rule was accepted by the House. Next day, the 12th. July, with regard to rule 18 of the draft rules, dealing with the question of allotment of time for private members' business, and to which a large number of amendments had been moved both by the Government and members of the different groups, *Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy*, Revenue Minister, informed the President that after discussions with the leaders of the different groups they had come to an agreement on the point at issue relating to rule 18. According to this agreement, instead of the Governor allotting different days for the disposal of the private members' business after consultation with the President, it would now be for the President to allot different days for the purpose, after consultation with the leaders of the different groups in the House. As there was still a large number of amendments to be disposed of, a suggestion was made that the House should be adjourned earlier for the day in order to enable the members of the House and the Government to come to an agreement as to which amendments should be taken up for consideration. The President accordingly adjourned the sitting, after which the whole House met informally to discuss the points at issue.

#### CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT BILL

13th. July :—The Council went back upon its own decision by agreeing to-day to accept the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Bill in the form in which it had been sent in by the Lower House. By an amendment moved on the 29th. May last by *Khan Sahib Abdul Hamid Chowdhury*, a member of the Coalition Group, the number of nominated seats, as provided in the Bill, were reduced from eight to four. The Lower House, to which the Bill was referred, however, turned down the amendment and restored the original clause thus retaining the entire nominated bloc. When the Council took the Bill again into consideration to-day it adopted, by 35 votes to 21, the motion of the Hon'ble Mr. *H. S. Suhrawardy* not to insist on the amendment to which the Assembly had previously disagreed. The Congress, the Progressive and the Krishak-Proja Parties joined their hands in opposing the motion which, as usual, was supported by the Coalition and their allies, the Europeans. The Government marshalled on this occasion all their forces and long before the commencement of the day's sitting Mr. *K. Sahabuddin*, Chief Government Whip, along with certain other prominent Coalitionists, were seen busily engaged in canvassing support for his party. A number of the members of the Lower House, supporters of the Government, were seen in this gallery watching the proceedings with eager interest. Mr. *Mossem Ali Chowdhury* (Lal Mia) and *Rai Bahadur Radhika Bhusan Roy*, who had on the previous occasion, voted with the Opposition remained neutral, and although the latter went to the same lobby with the Government supporters he, it appeared, did not record his vote. *Khan Bahadur Razaqul Haider Chowdhury* of the Coalition Party, who in the former occasion, remained neutral, now cast his vote in favour of the motion. Among the Hindu members, Mr. *Nagendra Narayan Roy* and Mr. *Saileswar Sinha Roy* sided with the Ministerial party. *Khan Sahib Abdul Hamid Chowdhury* and Dr. *Arabinda Barua*, both of the Coalition Party, consistently co-operated with the Opposition in opposing the motion. Mr. *Narendra Chandra Dutta* (Congress) and *Rai Sahib Jitendra Mohan Sen* (Progressive) were noticed to be absent.

## DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE (CONTD.)

14th. JULY :—Some amount of heat was generated when the Council was considering to-day the rule relating to the appointment of the Chairman of a select committee. On behalf of the Government, Mr. *Nalini Ranjan Sarker* suggested that the Minister-in-charge of a Bill should be the chairman. The President, Mr. *Satyendra Chandra Mitra*, referred to the procedure that was followed in the Central Assembly in this connection where, he pointed out, the Deputy President, or in his absence a member of the Panel of Chairmen acted as the Chairman of a select committee. The President explained that the Chairman of a select committee, must be one whom everybody considered to be a non-party man. If a Minister in charge of a Bill was appointed chairman of a select committee, he might not naturally adopt that attitude towards the Bill which a non-party member might. The suggestion of Mr. Sarker was carried. The House was then *prorogued*.

## Winter Session—Calcutta—23rd. Nov. to 20th. Dec. 1939

## ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

The Winter Session of the Bengal Legislative Council commenced at Calcutta on the 23rd November 1939, with the hon. Mr. *Satyendra Chandra Mitter*, President, in the chair. The sitting lasted a little over an hour.

*Begum Humida Momen*, (Coalition), moved an adjournment motion to discuss "the failure of the Government of Bengal to impress upon the Government of India the necessity of keeping the Calcutta Port open for Haj pilgrim traffic this year, which is causing great inconvenience to the intending pilgrims from Bengal and Assam". Sir K. *Nazimuddin*, Home Minister, objected to the adjournment motion on the ground that the Local Government had no direct responsibility in this matter whatsoever and it was entirely a central subject. The President ruled the motion out of order.

Mr. *Lalit Chandra Das*, (Congress), tabled an adjournment motion to discuss the situation arising out of the Bengal Government's notification dated September 15, 1939, embodying prohibitory orders for a period of six months, commencing from September 6 last, with regard to public meetings, assemblies or processions and with regard to the Press in Bengal, which has resulted in suppression of civil liberties in respect of all legitimate activities in those spheres. The Home Minister objected to the motion being admitted on the ground that this was a subject on which a discussion could have been raised by means of a resolution and the mover could have taken his chance at the ballot. The President ruled that the motion was in order, pointing out that this was the first opportunity which the member had since the publication of the notification to bring the matter to the notice of the Legislature. The President then wanted to know if the House had any objection to leave being granted for the motion. As the requisite number of members (thirteen) did not rise in their seats in support of leave being granted, the motion fell through. The House then adjourned.

## MILITARY TRAINING IN SCHOOLS

24th. NOVEMBER :—Non-official resolutions were discussed in the Council to-day. Of the three resolutions moved, one was withdrawn and two were carried. Mr. *Ranjit Pal Chowdhury* moved that effective steps should be taken so that physical drill in all Primary Schools, military drill in all Secondary Schools, and the study of military science and a course of military training for all College students might be made compulsory, irrespective of age, caste, creed and colour, throughout the whole province of Bengal. Sir *Nazimuddin*, Home Minister, said that he was in full accord with the aim and object of the motion. It was the accepted policy of the Government that every encouragement should be given to college students to have military training. But he was sorry to say that the response to opportunity for training in the University Training Corps had not been encouraging. Enrolment had not been to the full strength of the Corps, besides the percentage of those who did not avail themselves of the camp training was very big. He would see to it that there was further expansion of the Corps and he hoped that students of the Dacca and Calcutta Universities would take full advantage of these opportunities. Rai Bahadur K. C. *Panarjee*, Mr. *Kader Bux* and Khan Bahadur Md. *Ibrahim* also spoke on the resolution, which the mover ultimately withdrew "in view of the sympathetic attitude of the Government".



## CONTROL OF FILMS

Rai Bahadur *Keshab Chandra Banerjee* moved: The Council is of opinion that the Bengal Board of Film Censors should exercise stricter control in regard to films and the publication of film pictures in the newspapers which might have the effect of inculcating immoral ideas in the minds of young boys and girls. *Maulana Akram Khan* moved a short notice amendment for the deletion of the words "in the newspapers". The mover accepted the amended resolution which was carried.

## JAPAN'S PADDY CULTIVATION

The Council then passed a resolution expressing the opinion that an expert or experts be sent from here to Japan by the Government to investigate into the cause of such high outturn of paddy there and train Bengal peasants in the improved method employed by Japanese cultivators. The House then adjourned till the 27th.

## THE MONEY-LENDERS' BILL

27th. & 28th. NOVEMBER:—A surprise was in store for the Government when the Bengal Money-Lenders' Bill was brought before the Council to-day for taking it into consideration. When *Nawab Musharraf Hussain* moved for taking the Bill into consideration, the *President* said that he must be satisfied before he put the motion before the House that the previous consent of the Governor had been obtained. The Minister in charge of Justice replied that the consent had been obtained, but on the *President* insisting on being satisfied as to the proof of the sanction, the Minister left the House for bringing the relevant papers and the House was adjourned for half an hour to enable him to do so. The House re-assembled after 35 minutes, but still the Minister did not arrive and the House was adjourned till the next day, the 28th. November, when the *Minister-in-charge* of the Bill apologised for being unable to be present in the House yesterday, and stated that the Bill having been already passed in the Lower House, he thought no sanction was necessary as it automatically came up before the Upper House. The *President* said that it was against parliamentary etiquette to refer to what happened in the other House and asked the Minister to move the Bill *de novo*, which was done. The House then adjourned till Friday, the 1st. December.

## THE PROHIBITION BILL

1st. DECEMBER:—The prohibition policy of the Government came in for much castigation when the Council, discussing non-official measures, took up the consideration of the Bengal Prohibition Bill to-day. The Noakhali experiment, introduced two years ago, was ridiculed by *Prof. Humayun Kabir* as a "Lilliputian measure," while *Mr. Lalit Chandra Das*, the sponsor of the Bill, characterised the experiment as "a mere make-believe." The *Premier* contended while the Government did not oppose the policy of Prohibition, which is "one of the main pillars of Islamic faith," they did not agree to the principle underlying the present Bill. *Mr. Das's* motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee was rejected by 23 votes to 10.

## ABOLITION OF DOWRY BILL.

The Bengal Abolition of Dowry Bill sponsored by *Rai Bahadur Surendra Narayan Sinha* was on the motion of the Hon'ble *Nawab Musharraf Hussain*, circulated for public opinion by the 1st February next. The *Nawab* admitted the need of such a legislation but he thought it wise that the public should be consulted in the matter of a social legislation of this kind. The Mahomedan community especially, he added, were afraid of a social measure.

## SHOP ASSISTANTS BILL

The intention of the Government to introduce a bill in the current session for the purpose of regulating conditions of work of shop-assistants was announced by the hon. *Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy*, Minister for Commerce and Labour. The announcement was made in connection with *Prof. Humayun Kabir's* motion, that the Bengal Shop-Assistants Bill, sponsored by him, be taken into consideration. The *Minister* added, that the bill would be introduced in the Upper House and might possibly be referred to a Select Committee in the current session. *Prof. Kabir* eventually withdrew his motion on this assurance on behalf of the Government. The House then adjourned till the 6th.

## SHOPS AND ESTABLISHMENTS BILL

8th. DECEMBER :—As promised, the honourable Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy introduced the Bengal Shops and Establishments Bill, 1939 to-day. The Bill sought to provide 'inter alia' that no person employed in a shop should be required to work for more than seven hours a day unless he has been allowed an interval for rest of at least one hour during that day or for more than five hours in any one day unless he has been allowed an interval for rest of at least half an hour during the day. In the case of commercial establishments no employee should be called upon to work for more than 208 hours in any one month. All wages should be payable not later than the tenth day of the month immediately succeeding that in respect of which such wages were payable. An employee working in an establishment for a period of not less than six months should on the production of medical certificate, be entitled to sick leave, on pay calculated at the rate of half his existing pay, for a total period of not exceeding one month in any one year. Wages for overtime work should be calculated at the rate of one and one quarter times the ordinary rate of wages payable to the employee. Any person committing a breach of the rules may, on conviction, be punishable with fine which may extend to fifty rupees. The act, when passed, will apply in the first instance to the city of Calcutta and suburbs and to all the municipal areas in the districts of the 24-Perganas, Howrah and Hooghly. Thereafter, it will apply to such areas as the Provincial Government may specify by notification.

## WORKMEN'S PROTECTION BILL

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy further moved that two other bills, namely the Bengal Workmen's Protection (Amendment) Bill and the Inland Steam Vessels (Bengal Amendment) Bill be taken into consideration. The object of the former bill was to amend the Bengal Workmen's Protection Act, 1934, effectively to prevent the besetting of places where workmen receive their wages by professional money-lenders for the purpose of recovering their dues as a first charge on the wages of the workmen. It was also intended to extend the protection afforded by the Act to workmen in the employ of local authorities and public utility services and seamen.

## INLAND STEAM VESSELS AMEND. BILL

According to the Inland Steam Vessels Act of 1917 the Provincial Governments are not entitled to levy fees or recover costs from the parties involved in cases before the special courts of investigation into casualties to inland steam or motor vessels plying in the rivers of Bengal. In the absence of any such provision the Government have to bear all expenses incidental to these courts. The bill sought to empower the courts to make such orders as they thought fit respecting the costs of the investigation or any part thereof. The House then adjourned till Friday next.

## TRAINING IN AVIATION

8th. DECEMBER :—An announcement that the Government have under their consideration certain concrete proposals for development of aviation in this province was made by the Hon'ble *Khwaja Sir Nasimuddin* when the House discussed non-official resolutions. The Home Minister, however, was not inclined to reveal the character of the schemes for, he said, it would not be proper to do so until the necessary amount had been provided for in the budget. The occasion for the announcement was furnished by a resolution moved by *Rai Bahadur Surendra Narayan Sinha* (Progressive) suggesting that the Government of Bengal should either grant an annual subsidy to the Bengal Flying Club to enable them to popularise and extend their activities in teaching the theory and practice of flying, or themselves found some stipends for the training of air pilots and ground engineers developing thereby an interest of the people in aviation. The *Rai Bahadur* remarked that people to-day lived practically in the midst of air raids. All progressive countries in the world had encouraged aviation and flying clubs had received financial help from their respective Governments. But, unfortunately, aviation in Bengal had not been encouraged and developed. Even important places like Dacca and Darjeeling were not connected with the metropolis by means of aerial service. *Mr. Nur Ahmed* (Coalition), moving an amendment, opined that instead of granting an annual subsidy to the Bengal Flying Club the Government should found some scholarships so that at least forty young men might receive training in aviation every year. He had, however, every sympathy with the object of the mover of the resolution. Objecting to the acceptance of the amendment, *Mr. Banjit Pal Chowdhury* thought that in that case the character

of the resolution would be entirely changed. Opposing, Sir *Nasimuddin* intimated the House that the Government had not been idle and had gone into the question of imparting training in aviation to young men of this province. They had at present under their consideration certain concrete proposals for giving training so that the students might secure A and B licenses. But until the amount therefor had been provided in the budget, the Minister felt that it would be inadvisable to give those schemes out. He would, in those circumstances, request the Rai Bahadur to withdraw his resolution. Both the resolution and the amendment were withdrawn. The House then adjourned till Monday next, the 11th. December.

#### THE MONEYLENDERS' BILL

11th. DECEMBER :—The debate on the Bengal Moneylenders' Bill, clause by clause, as they were passed by the Assembly during the last session, commenced to-day. The Bill had been framed to supplement the provisions of the Bengal Money-lenders' Act of 1933, although it has been introduced as a separate measure. Among its principal provisions, by the definition of "loan" certain leading transactions have been excluded from the operation of the bill; for example, loans to or by Government, or by certain societies, including Co-operative Societies and also loans by banks and insurance concerns. Loans, however, include loans in kind. A "lender" has been defined as anyone who advances a loan while a "money-lender" is defined so as to limit the term to the class of what may be called professional lenders. Provision has been made for strict regulation of this class requiring them to be licensed and to keep certain accounts and furnish certain informations to borrowers, machinery being provided for the courts to enforce compliance with, or in some instances, to non-compliance with these provisions. Provision has also been made for regulating rates of interest on all loans, including the abolition of compound interest and also for limiting the amount of charges and other incidental expenses in relation to loans. The borrower is entitled to re-open transactions that offend against the provisions of the measure and to move the court for taking accounts. There is penal provision against any one who takes a document which does not state the true facts as to the transactions of loan to which it relates and also against any molestation of borrowers. The discussion was confined to the explanatory clause of the bill.

#### SHOPS AND ESTABLISHMENTS BILL

The Bengal Shops and Establishments Bill, which on a previous day was introduced in the House, was by a motion of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir *Nasimuddin* referred to a Select Committee consisting of eleven members, with instructions to submit their report by the 28th February next.

#### WORKMEN'S PROTECTION BILL

The Inland Steam Vessels (Bengal Amendment) Bill and the Bengal Workmen's Protection (Amendment) Bill, introduced previously in the House, were passed, the latter with slight modifications. The Council then adjourned.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

13th. to 14th. DECEMBER :—Following a protracted debate for three consecutive days the discussion on the war resolution came to a close on Thursday, the Council accepting a resolution which extended help and support to Britain in their prosecution of the war and, at the same time, intimated the desirability of examining afresh the Constitution of India with a view to the immediate attainment of Dominion Status. The motion adopted was an amalgamation of the resolution of Rai Bahadur *Surendra Narayan Sinha* (Independent) and an amendment put forward by Mr. *Nur Ahmed* (Coalition). The motion stood thus :

"This House is of opinion that whole-hearted help and support should be given to the British Government in the prosecution of their war against the German menace.

"The Council further approves of the policy of the Bengal Government towards the present international crisis in condemning Nazi aggression and declares its determination to resist this aggression and to protect the security and honour of the province of Bengal and India with the available resources of the province. It further desires that it should forthwith be made absolutely clear that the constitution of India shall be examined *de novo* at the end of the war with a view to the immediate attainment of the objective of Dominion Status with effective protection for the

due rights of the minorities and other sections in consultation and agreement with all the parties and communities concerned."

The motion was carried by 27 votes to 12, after which the House adjourned.

#### THE MONEY-LENDERS' BILL

15th. DECEMBER :—Consideration of the Bengal Money-lenders' Bill was resumed to-day, the discussion being confined to the explanatory clause of the measure. The debate on such a technical subject, which otherwise would have appeared dull and dry, was enlivened by the customary witticisms of the Hon. Minister in charge of the Bill. His action-speech, interspersed with humorous sallies, seemed to evoke a warm response till the Council Chamber re-sounded with peals of laughter. Adjourning the House till Monday next, the Hon'ble the *President* requested Nawab Musharuff Hossain to get himself in the meantime properly instructed as to what he did exactly mean by the term "Banking." As many as 15 amendments of the Bill were disposed of, of which only one was accepted by the Government and the rest were rejected by the House. The only motion that evoked certain amount of discussion in the course of which poll was demanded was that moved on behalf of the Congress group.

#### MR. SARKAR'S RESIGNATION

19th. DECEMBER :—The Council met in a tense atmosphere to-day. The air was thick with rumours of resignation by the *Finance Minister* and with eager expectation the members awaited his arrival. Cheers burst forth from the Congress benches as the Hon'ble Mr. N. R. Sarker made his appearance in the Chamber. The Coalitionists remained silent and sullen. A hush over the House as he rose to defend the stand he has taken on the issue raised by the resolution on War and the answer to the allegations levelled against him by *Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim*, Leader of the Coalition Party in the Upper House. "We have an emissary from the parallel Government at Wardha in the person of the Hon'ble Mr. N. R. Sarker, the Finance Minister," that was the language in which the Khan Bahadur had described him on the previous day. The retort was strong and effective. "I can at once tell the Khan Bahadur," Mr. Sarker replied, "that in the position which he and his associates have created for me, I am tempted to say that Wardha is a place of pilgrimage for me and the Khan Bahadur should never expect that I would always be a faithful disciple of Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay." (Meaning Mr. Jinnah thereby). When after half-an-hour the Finance Minister resumed his seat he was greeted with shouts of applause and appreciation from all sides of the House.

#### PRIVILEGE MOTION

21st. DECEMBER :—That the Ministers had "committed a grave breach of the privileges of the Council by persistently abstaining from attending its meetings for the transaction of business requiring their attendance." was alleged in a privilege motion moved to-day by Dr. K. K. Mookherji, on behalf of the Opposition. The motion prayed that the matter be brought to the notice of His Excellency the Governor. The motion was a sequel to the absence of the hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Labour Minister, who was to have dealt with matters falling under the Finance portfolio to-day, when the House was due to resume discussion of the supplementary estimates of expenditure for 1939-40. Members of the different parties criticised the Minister's absence and pointed out that in the past, Ministers had also been absent from the House during question time and during discussion of matters which related to their respective departments. *Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim*, Leader of the Ministerialist Coalition Party, said that it was high time that they informed His Excellency "of the chronic lapses of his Ministers." He, for one, held the view that if there was any recurrence of those lapses, they should "boycott the Council and bring the administration to a standstill." The *President* adjourned the House for fifteen minutes, remarking that it was reprehensible that in spite of repeated complaints, Ministers still neglected the House. Mr. Suhrawardy, who now attended the sitting, asked the members to realise that there was serious dislocation in the business of the Government and explained that it was on that account that they could not be punctual, however much they wished to be. He assured the House that there would not be a recurrence. Dr. Mookherji withdrew his motion in view of the assurance given by the Minister. The Council then adjourned till January 2, 1940 when it will resume discussion on the Bengal Money-Lenders' Bill.

# The Bombay Legislative Assembly

Poona Session—Poona—14th. to 31st. August 1939

## BOMBAY MUNICIPAL AMEND. BILL

The Poona session of the Bombay Legislative Assembly commenced at Poona on the 14th. August 1939. The hon. Mr. G. V. Mavalankar, Speaker, presided. The Select Committee reports on various Bills, such as the Bill to regulate the transactions of money-lending in the province, the Bill for the protection of tenants, the Agriculturists Debt Relief Bill and the Shop Assistants Bill were submitted.

The hon. Mr. L. M. Patil, Minister for Local Self-Government, moved a Bill to amend the Bombay Municipal Act (1888). After rejecting an amendment moved by Mr. S. H. Jhabvala, in less than half an hour, the House passed the third reading of the Bill.

## DEMAND OF PRESS SECURITY

15th. AUGUST :—Mr. Jamnadas Mehta asked leave of the House to move the adjournment of the House to draw attention to the action of the Government in demanding security from the Editor of *Sawadhan* and the Printer of the Luxmi Narayan Press, where it was published. The motion was adopted by 72 votes to 19.

## THE MONEY-LENDERS' BILL

The House then carried by 72 votes to 32, a motion of the hon. Mr. K. M. Munshi, that the period for the presentation of the Select Committee report on the Money-Lenders' Bill be extended to November 30, 1939, to enable the Bill to be considered along with the Agriculturists Debt Relief Bill, which would be shortly placed before the House. He said that both the Bills were closely connected. Mr. S. V. Parulekar and Mr. J. B. Greaves opposed the motion,

## LAND REVENUE AMEND. BILL

15th. to 21st. AUGUST :—Mr. Morarji Desai, Revenue Minister, moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the Bombay Land Revenue Code 1879 (as amended by the Select Committee). Further discussion was resumed on the next day, the 16th. August, when the House took up consideration of the various amendments tabled to clause 11 of the Bill pertaining to assessment and settlement of revenue of agricultural land. One of the amendments was fundamentally wrong and unscientific. Assessment was fixed on the theory that the State was entitled to a share of the produce of the land. It had nothing to do with the area of the lands one possessed. The result of the amendment, if accepted, he said, would entail the tenants to unnecessary hardship since any rise in the taxation would duly be shifted on to the tenants. After some discussion the amendment was rejected. The House also voted down by 57 votes against 27, an amendment by the same member for the deletion of the clause prescribing rental value. Mr. Morarji Desai said that this clause was the pivot of the Bill. Land assessments were based on several factors, the primary factor being rental value. He assured the House that there need be no apprehension of fictitious rental values since there was already a Bill on the anvil, namely, the tenancy legislation, by which usury and rack renting were sought to be prohibited. Next day, the 17th. August, Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta moved an amendment which sought to make agricultural profits the basis of assessment. Mr. Mehta urged that the present Bill would not solve the land revenue problem, inasmuch as revenue would continue to be assessed and collected from the wages of agriculturists instead of their being assessed and collected from the profits. The Bardoli Satyagraha and the Enquiry Committee that followed it also figured in the course of the debate when Opposition members pointed out that it was for the vindication of the principle, namely, assessment on agricultural profits, that the whole struggle was carried on. The hon. Mr. Morarji Desai, Revenue Minister, in his reply, stated that the issue for the Bardoli Satyagraha was not the one suggested but that the assessment was based on wrong data. While admitting that the principle opposed by the Opposition was also placed before the Bardoli Enquiry Committee by Mr. Mahadevi J. Desai, counsel for the peasants, it was never suggested, he said,

explained the many difficulties in the way of determining agricultural profits. "Cooked" accounts and bogus accounts would be a challenge to any one. Furthermore, agricultural profits were a nebulous thing. The difficulties here were much more than in the case of assessing income-tax. Mr. *Jamnadas Mehta's* amendment was pressed to a division and defeated by 63 votes to 29. Opposing another amendment moved by Sir A. M. K. *Dehlavi*, Leader of the Opposition, which sought to direct the Government to hold fresh settlement of land revenue within one year of the present Act, the Revenue Minister explained the many difficulties in the way. There were 180 talukas in the province which meant that 180 Settlement officers were required. It was the ambition of the Revenue Minister to train up as early as possible as many Settlement Officers as were available. He, however, hoped that between three and five years' time, he would be able to effect a resettlement in all the talukas. Three other amendments to the Bill were moved in quick succession. The discussion on the next day, the 18th. August, centred round the sub-clauses relating to the limits of enhancement of assessment, determination of assessment and the term of settlement. An amendment to the clause moved yesterday by Sir A. M. K. *Dehlavi* (Leader of the Opposition) for directing the Government to start a fresh settlement in this province within one year, and proposals seeking to raise the period to three years and five years respectively, were either rejected or withdrawn. Sir A. M. K. *Dehlavi* doubted if the whole Bill was not a measure for propaganda purposes so that the people might stand by them (the Government) in their hour of need. The hon. Mr. *Morarji Desai*, Revenue Minister, explaining the Government's difficulty in accepting the amendment, observed that settlement work involved the rights and privileges of peasants and as such required careful scrutiny. There were not many retired officers competent to do settlement work as suggested by the Opposition. He informed the House that he had already started preparing the necessary rules under the measure, although it had not yet been passed. An amendment by Mr. S. L. *Karandikar* seeking to empower peasants to challenge settlements in a court of law if the assessment exceeded any year the value of one-sixth of the net produce of the holding, was also negatived. The Minister pointed out that it was not possible for the Government to submit themselves to a test in court. That would disturb the machinery of assessment. Next day, the 19th. August, over 15 amendments were discussed. With the exception of two amendments, the rest were either rejected or not moved. The amendments accepted by the Government were one for deletion of the clause, relating to the history of collection of land revenue and the variations in the area of occupied and cultivated lands during the last thirty years in the matter of assessment and the other, for the inclusion of "ordinary expenses of cultivating such crops." There was considerable discussion on the clause pertaining to the orders on the Settlement Report. It was laid down in the clause, that orders passed by the Provincial Government shall be final and shall not be called in question in any court. Several amendments were moved in this clause, enabling the assessed group to bring the matter before a tribunal to be appointed by the Government or before the District or High Courts respectively. Further consideration of the amendments was held over, pending informal discussions between the Opposition members and the Revenue Minister on this question. The House then adjourned till Monday, the 31st. August, when by 67 votes to 31, it passed the third reading of the Bill. The opponents of the Bill confined their arguments to the "disappointing nature" of the legislation. Sir A. M. K. *Dehlavi*, Leader of the Opposition, and Mr. *Jamnadas Mehta* contended that an opportunity had been missed of launching agrarian legislation which would have left a landmark in the history of legislation, and that the relief done to the peasants was only nominal. The former characterised the Bill as "old wine in a new bottle" and that there was nothing in the legislation. He asserted that the hopes of the many parties in the country and that of the Congress had been belied. The hon. Mr. *Morarji Desai*, Revenue Minister, replying, pointed out that for the first time assessments to be made in the future would be subject to the vote of the House and such a thing had never happened in the past. He asserted that it should be clear to anyone who examined the Bill impartially, that reduction would be substantial in several cases where formerly the pitch of assessment was very high. Formerly the pitch of assessment was 50 per cent of the rental value and in some cases even 55 per cent in wetland practice. Now it was reduced to 35 per cent of the value. The danger of rack-renting would also be eliminated with the passing of the tenancy legislation and that would mean the assessment would only be 30 per cent. One important

change that had been made in the Bill was with regard to settlements. According to an agreed amendment on this question, any person aggrieved by the report of the Collector on assessment could apply to the Provincial Government for reference to the Revenue Tribunal. The Revenue Tribunal after making an enquiry, would submit its opinion on the objections raised to the Provincial Government.

#### THE BOMBAY TENANCY BILL

23rd. to 28rd. AUGUST :—By seventy votes to seven, the Assembly rejected to-day an amendment by Mr. P. W. Wagh to have the Tenancy Bill referred back to the Select Committee. The hon. Mr. Morarji Desai, the Revenue Minister, had just moved a motion that the Bill to provide for the protection of tenants in the Province of Bombay be read for the second time, when Mr. S. L. Karandikar raised a point of order as to whether the Bill as it emerged from the Select Committee was in order. Mr. Karandikar submitted that several important provisions contained originally in the Bill had been dropped. He contended that the Bill should be withdrawn, redrafted and then presented to the House. The hon. Mr. G. V. Mavlankar, the Speaker, held that there was no valid objection, since the scope of the Bill was to give protection to the tenants, and it was retained by the Select Committee. It was at this stage that Mr. Wagh moved his amendment. With the rejection of Mr. Wagh's amendment, Mr. Karandikar moved an amendment for referring back the Bill to the Select Committee to reconsider certain clauses. This amendment was also rejected. Discussion of the Bill, clause by clause, was then resumed. Over a dozen amendments were rejected before the House rose for the day. Next day, the 24rd. August, the definition of "rent" was debated at great length on amendments moved by Sardar N. G. Vinchoorkar and Mr. Jhabwala. It is laid down in the Bill that "rent" means any consideration in money or kind, or both, paid or payable, by a tenant on account of the use or occupation of land held by him, but shall not include the rendering of any personal service. The amendments sought to alter the position in regard to personal service. Sir A. M. K. Dahlavi, supporting Sardar Vinchoorkar's amendment, said that when two parties, namely, landlord and tenant, entered into a contract, no law should stand in the way. If the tenant had agreed to render a certain service, then he should do it. Rao Bahadur Chitale declared that agricultural economy could not well be served by the elimination of personal service. He argued that tenants would be in a better position to discharge their obligations if personal service was taken into account. Sir Chinubhai Madhwalal, supporting the amendment, said that there were many instances where tenants did not pay rent by way of share in crops but only their personal services were taken into consideration. The hon. Mr. Morarji Desai, opposing the amendments, declared that the Bill was the result of an earnest endeavour on the part of the Government to put the relations between the landlord and the tenant on a proper and equitable basis, in order that neither the landlord might exploit the tenant, nor the tenant become an irresponsible person. He explained that the relations between the two were not particularly happy in the several parts of the province and it was the intention of the Government to set matters right. As practical men, they had to see how the legal position created by the amendment would be utilised. Tenants were forced to work in some cases on landlords' own farms. On refusal to do so they were dealt with severely. The result of the amendment, if accepted, would be that the tenant would have to carry out personal services supposed to be based on an agreement. The amendments were declared lost. An amendment for the deletion of the sub-clause relating to the definition of the term "to cultivate personally" was moved by Mr. S. V. Parulekar. Discussion had not concluded when the House rose for the day.

#### THE FINANCE ACT AMEND. BILL

28th. to 31st. AUGUST :—The hon. Mr. A. B. Lathe, Finance Minister, moved to-day the Bill to amend the Bombay Finance Act. The Bill is designed to lighten the procedure for the recovery of the urban immovable tax. According to the amending Bill, a penalty is prescribed for default in payment of the tax and also it is made a first charge on the premises on which it is leviable. Leaders of the Opposition groups criticised the Government for bringing forward this measure and charged them with utilising the municipalities to recover the tax instead of doing it themselves, and also for transgressing on the rights of the Municipalities. A motion for postponement of the Bill, *sine die*, brought forward by Sir. A. M. Dahlav, Leader of the Opposition, was thrown out by 55 votes against 23.

Dr. Antroliker moved for closure, which the Deputy Speaker, Mr. N. G. Joshi, put to the House. Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi pointed out that there were some more members, including Europeans, who were wanting to speak. The closure motion was put to vote and was carried by 58 votes against 43. Thereupon Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi made a brief statement saying that no useful purpose would be served by their participation in the proceedings. He then walked out of the House followed by other Opposition members. This was the first time European members participated in a "walk-out". The Finance Minister, in the course of his reply, assured the House that steps would be taken to see that none suffered undue hardship on account of this Legislation. Next day, the 30th. August, a motion for the circulation of the Bill for a fortnight for eliciting public opinion was thrown out by the House, 69 voting against and 45 for. A motion for referring the Bill to a select committee was also rejected by the House. Amendments for exempting trustees of charities and waqfs from the operation of the penalty clause in the Bill were withdrawn by the movers on an assurance given by the hon. Mr. A. B. Lathe, the Finance Minister, that the Government would take particular care to see that they did not suffer any hardships. He also assured the House that before framing the rules he would consult the members of the House. An important amendment, which was moved on behalf of the Government and accepted, removed the retrospective character of the penal clause. Next day, the 31st. August, over a dozen amendments were discussed. Of the amendments moved two were accepted by the Government. One of them gives discretionary power to the Collector or the Municipality in the matter of levying penalty for default in payment of the property tax. According to the amendment, a penalty will be levied only if the authorities concerned are satisfied that the person liable to pay the tax had wilfully failed to pay it. By the second amendment the penalty leviable on default has been reduced to one-fourth of the tax payable instead of the whole amount as in the Bill. By 61 votes to 26, the House rejected an amendment moved by the Muslim League Party which sought to impose a graded penalty from one per cent of the tax payable to five per cent if the tax had not been paid within five months.

### Bombay Session—Bombay—25th Sept. to 31st. October 1939

The Bombay Session of the Assembly began its session on the 25th. September with the agenda left over from the Poona session. The agenda included eleven Government Bills, the more important of them being the Money-lenders' Bill, the Tenancy Bill, the Shop Assistants Bill and the Agricultural Debtors Bill, all of them awaiting second and third readings. The Fodder Ordinance promulgated by the Government, consequent on the famine conditions in Gujeret, has also been framed into an enactment and was also placed before the House. The thirty non-official Bills on the agenda included the Hindu Divorce Bill, the Prevention of Bigamous Marriages Bill, and other social legislation.

#### THE BOMBAY TENANCY BILL

27th. SEPT. to 3rd. OCTOBER :—The Bombay Tenancy Bill was discussed on these days. Mr. G. K. Phadake, in an amendment, suggested the inclusion of two sub-clauses to Section 6, the first that rent payable to the landlord by the tenant should be the first charge on crops and, secondly, the tenant should be made liable for the payment of land revenue to the Government in respect of land held and protected by the tenant. The Revenue Minister opposed the amendment, which was lost. Clause 7 dealing with the landlord's right in a protected tenancy was discussed at length. Mr. S. V. Parulekar urged that bigger landlords should not have the right to determine tenancy. The Revenue Minister expressed his faith that the landlords would not abuse the power vested in them and if the Government came across such instances, they would certainly come to the rescue of the tenant. Mr. Jamsadas Mehta pointed out that the words "for any agricultural purposes" were vague. He asked if bee-hiving would be an agricultural purpose for which the landlords could evict the tenant. The Revenue Minister appreciated the point made and promised to consider it. Mr. B. S. Hiray, Parliamentary Secretary, moved an amendment to the effect that a landlord be deemed to have used the land personally if he used the land by his own labour or by hired labour under his supervision or any member of his family. This amendment was accepted by the Minister and Clause 7 was passed by 47 votes to 12. Mr. H. V. Pataskar (Shri. Nihandak) moved an



amendment making provision for an appeal to the Collector, against an order for compensation made by the Mamlatdar. The Revenue Minister accepted the amendment and it was passed. Strong opposition was shown by a section of the House to Clause 22, which made non-issue of receipts by the landlord punishable by fine amounting to Rs 100. Mr. G. K. Phadke suggested an amendment that the fine be reduced to Rs. 10. The amendment was accepted. The House then adjourned till Monday, the 3rd. October, when the House passed the second and third readings of the Bill. The spokesmen of landlords characterised the Bill as a revolutionary measure, while the spokesmen of tenants said that it did not confer all the benefits that should be expected of a progressive government. The Revenue Minister. Mr. Morarji Desai, declared that it was safe to be slow in the initial stage of tenancy reform. The Bill affords protection to tenants with regard to permanency of tenure.

#### FODDER & GRAIN CONTROL BILL

6th. OCTOBER :—The Bombay Fodder and Grain Control Bill, which was intended to grant power to the Provincial Government to regulate and control the supply and distribution of fodder and grain including the price thereof during famine, passed the third reading to-day. During detailed consideration of the Bill, it was urged upon the Government that it should be made incumbent on sellers of fodder and grain to sell those commodities to *bona fide* customers. Otherwise, it was pointed out, sellers might conserve stock, thereby nullifying the benefits of the measure. Although the Revenue Minister explained that the Government had a constitutional difficulty in accepting the clause, the motion was pressed to a division and the House rejected it by an overwhelming majority. An amendment enjoining the seller to issue a receipt to the purchaser giving all the particulars of the sale was accepted by the House as a useful suggestion. The second and third readings were passed in quick succession.

#### AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS' RELIEF BILL

The House next took up for consideration the Agricultural Debtors' Relief Bill with the Select Committee Report thereon. The Bill provided for scaling down of debts of cultivating agriculturists in the Province whose debts did not exceed Rs. 15,000 and was not below Rs. 100. The Bill provided for the setting up of Debt Conciliation Boards and payment by easy instalments. A feature of the Bill was that a debtor was obliged to be a member of a Resource Society before he could avail himself of the facility. Next day the 7th. October, the Assembly continued discussion on the second reading of the Bill. An amendment from the Congress benches that an agriculturist should not be considered a debtor if money was due from him to agricultural labourers under him, was accepted. An amendment moved from the Congress benches which provided that the benefits of the Bill should be available to persons cultivating personally before April 1, 1937 was also accepted by the Government.

#### REDUCTION OF MARRIAGE EXPENSES

10th. OCTOBER :—The Assembly discussed to-day a non-official resolution recommending to the Government to undertake legislation to provide for compulsory reduction of expenses in connection with the marriage and other ceremonies of agriculturists. It was suggested that legislation may be undertaken to provide for "reasonable" reduction of expenses incurred on "unnecessary religious" ceremonies of agriculturists. An amendment was moved to include all classes of people within the scope of the resolution. A Muslim member moved an amendment to exclude Muslims from the scope of the resolution while other Muslim members welcomed the economy measure suggested in the resolution. The Home Minister, replying to the debate, said that he was one with the House in their view that marriage expenses should be curtailed and controlled especially among that class of people who could ill-afford them. But in social matters like the present one, legislation would not serve the purpose. "If we want some change in social habits, we must raise the standard of education of the people. Their moral attitude must change. Legislation should not go counter to the needs of human nature. The members must be aware how even a healthy measure like the Herda Act was resented by many people." The Minister added it was quite unfair to check by legislation the custom of people enjoying themselves on occasions of marriage. Society wanted it. People spending money for the purpose never grudged it. In view of these facts, he would request the mover to withdraw the resolution. The resolution was, however, withdrawn on the next day.

## MINORITIES AND THE SERVICES

11th. OCTOBER:—A spirited enunciation of the Government's policy with regard to the representation of minority communities in the Government services, was a feature of the debate to-day. *Sir Ali Mohamed Khan Dehlavi*, Leader of the Opposition, moved his resolution recommending to the Government that 20 per cent of appointments in the Government administration should be reserved for Muslims. *Mr. S. H. Jhabvala*, criticising the mandatory effect of the resolution, said that democracy would be at an end if the principle of the resolution was given effect to. He moved an amendment, which entitled any qualified person to get an appointment. *Mr. Babubhai Patel* from the Congress benches, in another amendment, drew the attention of the House to the fact that the Muslims formed only 8.8 per cent of the population in the province and that, therefore, the Government should see that excess Muslims in Government employ over their legitimate share be dispensed with. A Scheduled Class member pressed the claims of his community to 20 per cent of Government appointments and moved incorporation of the recommendation in the main resolution. The hon. *Mr. K. M. Munshi*, Home Minister, opposing the resolution, said that there could be only two principles which should guide all civilised Governments in the matter of appointment to the services. The first was one of efficiency, and the other that all sections who, due to general backwardness, deserved protection, should be cared for. The Minister referred to the classification of the communities as Advanced, Intermediate and Backward for the purpose of representation in the services, the latter two categories getting larger representation. The Muslims being classified as "Intermediate" had secured a very fair and just share of the appointments in Government services. *Mr. Munshi* stressed the need for safeguarding the efficiency of the administration which should not be sacrificed while protecting the legitimate claims of the minorities. He assured the House that since the acceptance of office by the Congress, the Government had been doing everything in their power to see that the rights of the minorities were safely conserved. The resolution was lost without a division.

## AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS' RELIEF BILL (CONTD.)

16th. to 25th. OCTOBER:—The House resumed discussion to-day on Clause 4 of the Agricultural Debtors Relief Bill, which dealt with the constitution of the Debt Adjustment Board. Discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned till the next day, the 17th October, when after Clause 5 vesting power in the Provincial Government to dissolve a Debt Adjustment Board or remove a member thereof was adopted, the House next disposed of five more clauses, which gave power to the Board to decide all cases relating to adjustment of debts and provided that decisions of the Board shall have the validity of judicial proceedings and made certain awards of Board appealable. Clauses of the Bill which prescribed a stamp fee of two rupees and a court fee for appeal against the decision of the Board were opposed by members. The Opposition urged that in an ameliorative measure the imposition of fees went against the grain. The Finance Minister replied that justice should not be too cheap and funds were required to pay the salary of officers, and if anything remained in excess that would be spent for improving the condition of agriculturists. Next day, the 18th. October the House passed as many as twenty-one clauses in the course of the day. Strong opposition was in evidence, however, when Clause 24 was taken up. This clause limited the jurisdiction of a Debt Adjustment Board to entertain an application for adjustment of the debt of a person whose debts were not more than Rs. 85,000. By way of amendments, figures varying from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 25,000 were suggested. One amendment sought to fix a minimum limit at Rs. 50. The amendments were thrown out. Next day, the 20th. October, the House voted on amendments to Clause 40. *Mr. D. K. Kunte's* (Congress) amendment alone was accepted after slight modifications. The amended clause sought to give relief to "debtors" by scaling down their debts according to a definite plan, taking into consideration the fall in prices of agricultural products after 1931. It also laid down that at the time of application to the Board, if the interest was more than the principal, twice the amount of principal would be deemed to be the amount due to the debtor. On the 23rd. October, the vital clauses in the Bill, laying down provisions for scaling down debts of agriculturists to their paying capacity, engaged the attention of the House to-day. Members of the Opposition sponsored an amendment recommending graded scaling down instead of the uniform one proposed in the Bill. The Finance Minister opposed the proposal. A series of

clauses explaining the details which an award made by an Adjustment Board should contain were then adopted. Amendments were moved to suggest that the Government should not claim priority in respect of their dues but they were rejected. The Finance Minister assured the House that in case any difficulty should arise in working the Bill, improvements to it would certainly be considered. Next day, the 24th. October, the House considered the circumstances when a Debt Adjustment Board had the right to declare a debtor insolvent. Instead of Clause 64, the House accepted the amendment of Mr. D. K. Kunte to the above clause, which laid down the conditions of insolvency. According to the amendment the Board was empowered to adjudicate a debtor an insolvent if his paying capacity was inadequate to pay the total amount of his debts, or if a debtor was in default of two consecutive or any three instalments payable under the award. The amendment further stated that the order of adjudication thus made was to be deemed to be an order of the court. The amended clause being comprehensive, the House decided to delete clauses 68 to 74. Next day, the 25th. October, the second and the third readings of the Bill were passed.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

**25th. OCTOBER:—**The Assembly presented an animated appearance in the afternoon, when, before a crowded house, the Prime Minister, the hon. Mr. B. G. Kher, moved the Congress resolution disapproving of the Viceroyal declaration. The Premier moved as follows:—

"This Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and have further, in complete disregard of Indian opinion, passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of Provincial Governments.

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential, in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people, that principles of democracy should be applied to India and her policy should be guided by her people; and that India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution, and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to the present governance of India, including arrangements whereby all war measures in this province may be undertaken with the consent of and executed through the Provincial Government.

"This Assembly regrets that the situation in India has not been rightly understood by His Majesty's Government when authorising the statement that has been made on their behalf in regard to India."

Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi, Leader of the Opposition, moved an amendment on behalf of the Muslim League Party which was on the lines of the Muslim League resolution on the subject. The amendment *inter alia* stated that the parliamentary system of Government under the present constitution had failed and that the entire problem of India's future constitution should be revised *de novo* and also the British Government should not make any commitment without the approval and consent of the All-India Muslim League.

Mr. Ak Bahadur Khan wanted to know if the amendment was in order. He said that no amendment could be moved which was of a nugatory character. The aim of the Muslim League amendment ran counter to that of the original resolution. While the Premier's motion demanded that India should be regarded as an independent nation, the amendment sought to divide the country into Muslim India and non-Muslim India. He asserted that the amendment was an independent proposition and not an amendment.

Mr. S. H. Jhabvala moved a series of amendments which sought to make verbal changes in the resolution. Dr. B. E. Ambedkar, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Mr. B. S. Khedgikar moved their respective amendments.

Mr. C. P. Bramble (European Group), on behalf of the Progress Party, moved the following amendment:

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that, in view of the fact that in spite of all the differences regarding the methods of achieving the goal of Indian political freedom and the pace at which India should achieve it, all parties

and interests are united in the demand for Dominion Status within the meaning of the Statute of Westminster, the existing constitution shall be amended, with the approval not only of the majority party but of the minorities also, as soon after the present war as is practicable, with the object of conferring upon India Dominion Status within the meaning of the Statute of Westminster; and that a declaration to this effect should forthwith be made.

"Finally, this Assembly recommends that in the meantime, the Government should co-operate with His Majesty's Government and the Government of India in the prosecution of the war so that all necessary measures may be executed through the Provincial Government."

Mr. S. K. Patil (Congress) moved an amendment which stated that "in view of the failure of the British Government to meet the Indian demands, this Assembly, while recording its fullest confidence in the Ministry, calls upon it to tender its resignation."

When the resolution was taken up for consideration by the House on the next day, the 26th. October, the Premier, commending the resolution to the House, traced at considerable length the events leading up to the present situation and recalled the Congress demand for a declaration of policy, the Viceroy's statement as also the statement of Lord Zetland in the House of Lords. The Viceroyal declaration had been found disappointing not only by the Congress but also by the National Liberal Federation. The Premier was sarcastic when he referred to the mention of the 1919 and 1929 declarations of policy "which will, I am sure, be repeated in 1949 and 1959 and 1969, if indeed we are so supine as to await the pleasure of those who are to-day ruling over us in the matter of our progress on the road to self-determination." Proceeding, Mr. Kher said, "All our demands have been turned down. The question then arises as to what should be our course of action and this brings me to the resolution before that House. In the first part, it regrets that India should have been made to participate in the war without the consent of the people and that laws should have been passed and measures enacted curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. Indians were not consulted before the war was declared. They have no effective voice in the prosecution of the war, and as a matter of fact, the powers of the Provincial Governments have been curtailed by the amendment of the Government of India Act passed without India's consent. The first portion of the resolution, therefore, expresses our regret that all this should have been done, against our will. The second part of the resolution declares that in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people the principles of democracy should be applied to India, that her policy should be guided by her people, that India should be regarded as a free nation entitled to frame her own constitution and with that end in view, all necessary changes in the form of the Government should be made in the immediate present as far as possible. It is a great pity that a resolution which demands these rights for this country should have any opposition at all. A resolution of the nature ought to be passed with one voice. The third part of the resolution expresses regret that the situation in India has not been rightly understood by His Majesty's Government when authorising the statement that has been made on their behalf. The statement, as has been observed, would have been out of date even 20 years ago. It is based on the assumption that being divided and disunited, the Indian people are unfit and unable to govern themselves. This is not true. It is true that there are minorities and there are differences in this country but this is not the only country where there are minorities or religious differences and for our part, we have always stood for the amplest guarantees for the rights of minorities. I cannot conclude my remarks better than by quoting Mahatma Gandhi's statement which says that 'it would have been better if the British Government had declined to make any statement whatsoever. The long expected statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of divide and rule is to continue. So far as I can see, the Congress will be no party to it, nor can the India of the Congress conception be a partner with Britain in her war with Herr Hitler. The Indian declaration shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it. Another Round Table Conference is promised at the end of the war. Like its predecessor, it is bound to fail. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone. What the future has in store for India, I dare not foretell.

Sir A. M. K. Dehnavi, who moved the Muslim League amendment, declared that during the last two and a half years, it had been proved that the

Congress had done things in its own way without any regard for the interests of the minorities. The attitude of the Muslim League Party was well known. They stood at one with all those who were striving for the betterment of the country on all vital issues affecting the community. They stood for democracy. But the attitude of the Congress Party had made them revise their attitude. He said that the Muslim League Party's amendment was moved with the sincere and honest hope, that democracy might be granted to this country, but on proper lines. He reminded the Congress that, on several occasions in the past, the League had stood by the Congress. The accusation of 'divide and rule' had been made by the Congress against the British Government. But, it was a matter of truth, he asserted, that the Congress had all along applied the same principle in its rule. Ceaseless efforts had been made to divide the Muslims. Inducements of all kinds had been held out. Divisions were created among the Scheduled Classes. He reiterated that, whatever might be the merits or demerits of a democratic parliamentary system, in so far as India was concerned; that system had failed because of the conditions obtaining in this country. He hoped that the Congress, even if it went out of office now, would be back, but with a changed heart and a different outlook. Sir Ali Mohamed disagreed with the Congress in its insistence in calling upon the British Government to make a declaration when busy with matters of life and death, and asking them to lay down categorically a certain principle with regard to the future of India. On the face of things, it was not practicable.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that the resolution was both improper and inopportune, as it asked the House to make certain demands and a declaration and also sought the sanction of the House to follow certain procedure in case those demands were not met. It was obvious that certain demands had been made on His Excellency the Viceroy, but those demands had not been made by the House. The Prime Minister did not think fit to table those demands first before this House. The procedure followed was different. Something was done by somebody, and now the Ministry came to this House and said : "The affair has been bungled. Please come to our rescue." Proceeding, Dr. Ambedkar said that the Viceregal declaration had been made over a week ago. The proper course for this House would be to express its opinion that the declaration was not satisfactory. The resolution was so worded that it did not in any way express an opinion as to whether that declaration was acceptable or not, or whether any other declaration should be made. Coming to the merits of the resolution, he was in agreement with the first part of it, namely, about the British Government making India a participant in the war without the consent of the people of India. The foreign policy of the Empire was controlled by the British Cabinet. This country had no voice in the foreign policy. Probably, an invitation might be extended to somebody to go where peace would be concluded in order to affix his signature. It was indeed a very anomalous position that without the consent of this country, people had been brought into the slaughter. He asserted that India had a greater right than even the Dominions to be consulted in this matter. And although this country had been involved in a war, it had neither an Air Force nor an Army nor a Navy of its own. Proceeding, Dr. Ambedkar said that the democracy envisaged by the Congress however was that the majority would not suit this country. He referred to the status of Harijans in the body politic of India. Their position remained the same as before. He would not submit to a democracy wherein the Muslims and Scheduled Classes would remain for all time a minority. Dr. Ambedkar then cited instances of alleged ill-treatment of Harijans and maintained that the composition of the administration was such that the Caste Hindus were in an overwhelming majority, and they were very hostile to the few Scheduled Class members who were in service. Opposing the amendments tabled to his formula, Dr. Ambedkar said, "In any constitution that is framed, we shall claim the right that, whatever provisions may be made relating to our safeguards, must be certified as adequate by the accredited representatives of the Depressed Classes." A mere recognition of the fact that the minorities should have a voice in the governance of the country would not suffice. There was the social, economic and religious dominance of the Caste Hindus over the Untouchables, and he would not submit to political dominance also. He would fight tooth and nail any such domination. He was not for any constitution in which the Scheduled Classes would not have freedom and not an equal partnership. He would not say "Damn your safeguards. Give me my independence." But given sufficient

Safeguards, he would have the Congress have its demands. Referring to the contemplated resignation of the Ministry, he wanted to know why they wanted the permission of the House. It was purely a party issue.

Mr. C. P. Bramble, commending his amendment to the House, declared that the resolution was ill-conceived. There was a great deal in the Viceroyal Statement, and he thought the whole matter had been misunderstood. Mr. Bramble proceeding said that under the circumstances prevailing in India, it was not possible to obtain the consent of the country for the declaration of war. Nor was there any constitutional necessity to do so. Referring to the impending Ministerial resignation, Mr. Bramble said: "I would be extremely sorry if they resign. I say this as a member of the Opposition. The only healthy reaction to a crisis such as the present one should be that all should rally round the duly constituted authority. The attitude which the Opposition should now adopt is one of hearty co-operation with the Government. But our present Government has seen fit to divest themselves of responsibility at the juncture. We should be deceiving ourselves if we were to reject the possibility and the probability of this province having to be governed by His Excellency the Governor in his sole discretion under Section 39 of the Government of India Act. But I am not expressing any lack of confidence in His Excellency the Governor when I say that I must sincerely regret when this necessity arises.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, while fully subscribing to the Congress point of view, in so far as it related to Britain's failure to consult India in the declaration of war, deprecated the Congress move to vacate office. The position did not warrant such a procedure. The Congress was aware that the country had no voice in her foreign policy. The Congress had accepted office and continued to function all these days in the full knowledge of the limitations under the Government of India Act. He wondered why they should make a grievance of it now and try to run away. As for the Viceroyal statement, it had been considered throughout the country as unsatisfactory. With regard to the war aims of the British Government none could have any quarrel. Everybody in this country was resounding with denunciation of Hitler. The action of the British Government was in fact considered belated. On the minorities question, Mr. Mehta charged the British Government with creating disunity in this country. The minorities question was a manufactured one. It was started in 1905 and patented since then. The Congress was also, he averred, a party to this "national suicide." Resuming his speech on the next day, the 27th October, Mr. Mehta opposed the Muslim League amendment. He repudiated the claims of the League to represent all the Muslims in this country. "It is a false statement," he said, "that the Muslims of this country are the property of the League. Even so, are we not the property of the Congress either." He did not despair the present situation in the country. With courage and understanding the communal problem could be solved. But, he added, nobody in this country had the right to stand in the way of the progress of the country. The position of India to-day was most abject and humiliating. The Viceroyal Statement was no doubt unsatisfactory. The declaration, he went on to say, had at least the velvet glove, but the latest statement of Sir Samuel Hoare exhibited the iron glove of British Imperialism. But Mr. Mehta said, the Congress should not resign and "run away" now. The Congress had admitted this was a just way. By resigning they would become an ally of Hitler, whether the Congress liked it or not.

Mr. S. H. Jhabvala (Railway Labour), who had a few verbal amendments in his name, assured the Congress that the working class would back them in whatever step they might take. Mr. R. A. Khedgiker (Trade Union) also supported the resolution and wanted the resolution to go further. This was a moment, he said, when all should sink their differences and stand united against British Imperialism.

The hon. Mr. K. M. Munshi, speaking on the resolution, explained that the issue before the House was whether the House wanted the Ministry, which had co-operated with Britain in this war, to do so without being assured that India would be granted the status of a full self-governing country at the end of the war and without being given any share in the present governance of the country. He reiterated the appeal of the Premier that in so far as this issue was concerned, no Indian could differ and all members should keep their minds open. The resolution should not be judged from a party point of view, but from the larger interests of the country. Referring to the Muslim League amendment, Mr. Munshi explained

amazement at the plea advanced that the democratic parliamentary system of government was unsuited to the genius of the country. If the amendment was taken at its face value, it would mean that we must go back; it would mean that India should have feudal rule or foreign rule. Mr. Munshi questioned the propriety of the Muslim League Party asking for the consideration of an amendment which was more a matter of internal bargaining and making it an issue at a time when they were trying to assert their national dignity with regard to foreign rule. The Muslims in the Punjab, as was evident from the resolution tabled on behalf of the Unionist Party, wanted Dominion Status. But in Bombay they did not want it. "Is it that if Muslims are not in a majority in a province, it must remain under foreign rule?" he asked.

Referring to Mr. Bramble's (European Group) argument that the Ministries would fail in their duty if they resigned, Mr. Munshi declared that it was really the other way about. The Indian National Congress, for the first time in history, in spite of the country's yearning for freedom and democracy, offered its hand of friendship to Britain. It was prepared to share the burden of responsibility in this war. What it wanted was a recognition of its status not now, but after the war. It wanted to share the responsibility of waging the war in the present. But Congressmen were rudely reminded that, however much they might be prepared to fight shoulder to shoulder with the British, they, who had for two years governed the provinces successfully, were too profane to touch sacred Delhi. "We are ready to fight as free Indians on the side of England to free the world from Totalitarianism", declared the Minister. "We want, we yearn to share the privilege. But if the privilege of partnership is denied to us, the British war policy in India assumes a different shape. It must be admitted and realised that the days of Clive and Dupleix are gone, when Europeans could hire mercenaries or cajole interests to conquer India for them. Now struggling for the dignity of free men, we can only fight freely, willingly, and for a cause which we have at heart." Mr. Munshi then answered some of the criticisms levelled by Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar had referred to the numerous instances of hardship suffered by Harijans. His passionate remonstrances were not relevant to the issue before the House. "We ourselves had stated", observed Mr. Munshi, "that the treatment meted out to Harijans has been a blot on Hinduism. We, Congressmen, have spoken, felt and worked and fought for Harijans. Gandhiji, above all men, has done wonders to purge Hinduism of this sin and crime." But the remedy for all the evils lay in democracy. Democracy alone could give the social and economic underdog a chance to assert itself in elected assemblies. He asserted that the Congress would be no party to a constitution that would deminate the Minorities. Mr. Munshi concluded, "We have our sense of duty. In view of the extra-ordinary situation, we were willing to co-operate with Britain, but only as partners in the venture. No self-respecting nation can do anything less. We are told 'Do your duty and stick to your job'. Why and what for? The offer stands even to-day. The war can be fought provided the war is ours" (Cheers).

Mr. Ali Bahadur Khan (Independent) extending his support to the resolution, asserted that the Muslim League were not the representatives of the Muslim masses as such. During the election they deceived the masses by false declarations, namely, that they stood for the independence of the country. Now, when the time came for the manifestation of the independence spirit the Muslim Leaguers reiled and showed themselves up as the true instruments of British Imperialism. Islam stood for complete democracy and the League had said so. Now he was shocked to hear the Leader of the Muslim League Party, Sir A. M. K. Dehlavi, moving an amendment that democracy was unsuited to the genius of this country. Even the press owing allegiance to the Muslim League had condemned unequivocally the Viceroyal statement. On a clear issue such as freedom or subjection, the Muslims in the whole country would unanimously stand by the Congress. The Muslim League had no sure foundation but its rise phenomenal. "They duped and deceived the masses", he said. The propaganda they had carried on was deliberately false. The Muslims were a deeply religious and touchy people. When they were told that a mosque had been demolished somewhere, they were enraged. But no mosque had been demolished. The League had said that as far as this presidency was concerned as many mosques had been demolished. This was not true. The Government had allowed such dangerous propaganda to be carried on. "Now is the time for you to go to the Muslim masses. They will join any force which strives for independence." The Muslims were strong enough and they were not afraid of any threats.

being made on their liberty. They would fight for it. On the question of India's participation in the war, the speaker declared that while India was in full sympathy with the Allies, he would not play "the role of a recruiting sergeant with the mark of subjection stamped on my face.

The hon. Mr. *Morarji R. Desai* said that the arguments advanced against the resolution would do no credit to anyone, but would be taken advantage of by a third party. Mahatma Gandhi had observed that a stone was given instead of bread. That had only proved too true. The stone was followed by a stick. Sir Samuel Hoare, the "Strong Man of the Empire", who once gave a threat to the Congress and then carried it out, had once again said that His Majesty's Government would be carried on with efficiency, strength and justice. His speech was humiliating not only to the Congress, but to the whole country. He had taken that attitude because of the views expressed by the Opposition here. The Leader of the Opposition had contended that democracy as practised by the Congress was of such a manner that it had convinced him of the unsuitability of democracy in this country. No sentence of greater shame could have been uttered by an Indian. The present was an occasion of life and death. Granting that all the blame in the country to-day belonged to the Congress, even then, it did not lie in the mouth of any Indian to say that he would like to be governed by a foreigner. What was obviously a matter for internal adjustment should not be brought in a big issue. As for his part he would submit to rule by Muslims if the British were to abdicate in their favour.

Mr. *S. H. Prater* (Anglo-Indian, Bombay City and Suburbs) opposing the resolution declared that the first reaction of Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Nehru at the outbreak of war was to extend unconditional support for Great Britain. It was a spontaneous and chivalrous urge to help Britain. But later, political considerations arose. He could understand Congress opposition because of its traditional attitude towards the Paramount Power. Furthermore, the Congress being committed to a definite policy was compelled to make conditions for its support. He reminded the Congress of the numerous millions in this country who did not subscribe to its views. The moment Congress raised constitutional issues, it at once released forces of disunity in this country. Mr. Prater, concluding, said that he believed in the sincerity of the Viceregal statement and the statement of Sir Samuel Hoare. (Ironical cheers.) It was no use ridiculing the apprehensions of the minorities; they should be faced.

Sir *D. B. Cooper* deplored that such a resolution should have been moved in the House at all. The many speeches made showed the marked divergence of views and he was afraid that at any future Round Table Conference the British Government might make use of it against the granting of dominion status.

Mr. *S. K. Patil* (Congress) in advocating ministerial resignation declared that it should not be misunderstood that the resignation was an outcome of lack of confidence in the Ministry. The war, he asserted, had no real aims as such and if there were any, they were useless. Referring to the Muslim League amendment, the speaker said that the first reaction to the amendment was Sir Samuel Hoare's statement. Secondly, the League's declaration of lack of confidence in democracy had clean knocked the bottom out of the League's existence. At present the choice was between national self-respect and a little doubtful good that might be done by sticking to office. The Congress, of course, would prefer the former. Mr. Rajagopalachari had already tendered his resignation. (Cheers from Congress benches.)

The hon. Mr. *R. G. Kher*, in the course of his reply, appealed to the various parties to sink their differences and to stand united at a momentous time like this. The various amendments were either withdrawn or thrown out. The Muslim League Party amendment was negatived by 98 votes against 23. An amendment of Dr. Ambedkar as amended by the hon. Mr. K. M. Munshi was declared carried. The amendment *inter alia* stated that in the constitution to be framed, adequate safeguards for the protection of rights and liberties of the minority communities in India be made.

The resolution as amended was carried by 92 votes against 56 amidst acclamation. The House then adjourned.

#### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKETING BILL

26th. OCTOBER :—Two important Bills were passed to-day. The Agricultural Produce Marketing Bill was passed through all three readings before noon and



although the European members opposed the extension of the session, the House sat in the evening and passed the Shop Assistants Bill, a measure for which there had been great demand from the public.

#### SHOP ASSISTANTS BILL

The Bombay Shops and Establishments Bill (popularly known as the Shop Assistants Bill) sought to regulate the hours of work in shops, commercial establishments, restaurants, eating houses, theatres and other establishments. The provisions do not apply to the domestic services. The Bill prescribed a maximum of 9½ hours of work per day for employees, one day of rest in the week and fixed 9 p. m. as the closing time for shops. A feature of the Bill was that it sought to prevent employment of children under 12 years of age and restricted the hours of work of youths between the ages of 13 and 17 to eight hours a day, and that too during day time only.

#### RESIGNATION OF THE MINISTRY

The Assembly concluded its session on the 31st. October, and the *Speaker* adjourned the House *sine die*. Mr. B. G. Kher, the Premier, motored from the Assembly Hall to the Government House to hand over the resignation. He was seen off by his colleagues and the Congress Party members, and was cheered lustily.

"Our resignation is the inevitable consequence of the refusal of the British Government to recognise our right to determine our country's future in consonance with the will of our people", said Mr. Kher immediately after tendering the resignation of his Ministry. He continued :

"We were opposed to office acceptance early in 1937, but later we took office as an experiment to test the sincerity of the British people and to increase our own strength. Our purpose was two-fold, namely, to discharge the day-to-day administration of the province efficiently, and to advance the country on the path of political freedom to the greatest possible extent. Neither of these objects can be carried on in the altered circumstances without a change of heart on the part of those who are at the seat of power in New Delhi and Whitehall. What use then is our remaining in office ?

"I was pained to observe that some of the Anglo-Indian papers accused us of having neglected the interests of the minorities, and our enforcement of Prohibition in Bombay has been cited as an instance in support of this contention. I must emphatically repudiate this charge, as Prohibition has nothing to do with any majority or minority, because it is a reform in the interests of the whole country. We have tried to serve our people—all sections including the minorities—to the best of our ability."

## The Bombay Legislative Council

The Bombay Legislative Council sat for 2½ hours on the 4th. September 1939 at Poona and disposed of all the three readings of the Bombay Finance Act (Amendment) Bill, as passed by the Lower House. The Council then adjourned *sine die*.

### Bombay Session—Bombay—27th. Sept. to 31st. October 1939

#### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKETS BILL

The Council met again on the 27th. September 1939 when the Bombay Agricultural Produce Markets Bill was read for the first time. The Bill, was introduced by the Finance Minister, proposed to provide for better regulation of buying and selling of all agricultural produce including cotton and the establishment of regulated markets for that purpose in the province. This Bill will repeal the Bombay Cotton Markets Act of 1927, in view of the more comprehensive legislation undertaken. Agricultural produce is defined in the Bill to include the produce of horticulture and animal husbandry and power is taken by the Government to regulate buying and selling of an agricultural produce not mentioned in the schedule now appended to the Bill, by notification in the Bombay Government Gazette. The Bill also provided that the control over Market Committees constituted under the Bill, the Committees being bodies corporate with power to levy fees and to form Market

Committee funds to be used for purposes defined in the Bill. After the Bill had been read for the first time to-day, Opposition members moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. Before the Finance Minister had replied, the House adjourned for the day. Next day, the 28th. September, the House referred the Bill to a Select Committee for consideration and report and then adjourned till the 12th. October, and passed on the 20th. October the third reading of the Tenancy Bill and all the three readings of the Fodder and Grain Control Bill.

**31st. OCTOBER :—**Before the Prime Minister tendered the resignation of the Ministry to-day he attended the Council, at which the Bill to amend the Bombay Local Boards Act was adopted.

The Harijan Disabilities Removal Bill and the City of Bombay Municipal Amending Bill were not taken up as these two Bills had not been considered by the Lower House to-day as expected. The Premier explained that the Government had intended to pilot the Bills to-day itself, but the members of the Independent Labour Party had objected to hurrying through the Harijan Bill, as they had found that the Bill did not go far enough.

The Leader of the Opposition and the members of the Progress Party had opposed consideration of the City of Bombay Municipal Amending Bill. This Bill sought to give power to the Bombay Municipality to levy a town duty on a large number of tinned articles and the Progressive Party desired to have time to consider the Bill in detail. As it was not the invention of the Government to hurry through any legislation, the Premier said they had acceded to the wishes of the members of the Opposition and had not pressed consideration of those two measures. The Premier, in conclusion, thanked the members for their co-operation in conducting the proceedings of the House. The Speaker then adjourned the House *sine die*.

## The Madras Legislative Assembly

August Session—Madras—4th. August to 8th. August 1939

### THE TEMPLE-ENTRY INDEMNITY BILL

The August session of the Madras Legislative Assembly commenced at Madras on the 4th. August 1939. After interpellations, the Temple-Entry Indemnity Bill was introduced by the Prime Minister who moved that it be taken into consideration at once. In commending the motion to the acceptance of the House, the Prime Minister referred to the circumstances necessitating the issue of the Ordinance and the introduction of the Bill. He maintained that the temple-entry reform was not only right but long overdue; and that when temples were opened, it was impossible for the Government to remain quiet without preserving the gain and furthering the cause of reform. Anticipating the lines of attack by the Opposition, the Prime Minister said that the plan of the Malabar Temple-Entry Act had not been abandoned. It would certainly come into play where the trustee was unwilling to act in consonance with general public feeling. The present measure was necessary to protect the trustee who had the good sense to respond to public opinion where it was in favour of removing the disability. Each measure, the Prime Minister observed, was necessary and supplemented the other. The Prime Minister held the view that the ascertainment of local opinion by means of a vote would lead to unnecessary irritation, animosity and bitterness. There was no certainty, in his opinion, that Sanatanists and fundamentalists would relent in their opposition even after a referendum. To them temple-entry by Harijans was one that should be eternally opposed. "I am prepared to reconsider my position," the Prime Minister said, "if an assurance is forthcoming that once the vote has been given in respect of a temple here or a temple there, they will abide by it. But unfortunately, there is none in the country to-day who can make that declaration on their behalf." Next day, the 4th. August, the Bill was passed without a dissentient voice and amidst loud cheering from the Ministerialists. Every one of the amendments moved by Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari,

the only member on the Opposition side who suggested changes, was rejected. All the amendments moved by the *Prime Minister*, with a view to improving the Bill, were agreed to with little discussion. Opposition motions in the main sought to introduce the principle of referendum for the ascertainment of public opinion on the lines of the Malabar Temple-Entry Act. The *Prime Minister*, while not opposing the principle as such, contended that it was unnecessary to provide for the same method in more than one legislation. The principle of the vote would be applied wherever it was found necessary, he said. But the method of eliciting opinion by the Trustee or authority, through personal contacts among the people concerned would, in his view, be generally more satisfactory, as it would eliminate the chances of confusion and conflict that might arise in the ballot procedure. An agreement by understanding, he urged, was much better than determination of the issue by mechanical majorities. Moreover, it was not easy to stipulate what should constitute the deciding majority. The *Prime Minister*, however, assured the House that both methods would stand side by side and would be resorted to as necessitated by circumstances and that the Government might be trusted to act properly. The *Prime Minister* reiterated that no political motive was behind the measure. It was conceived in a purely religious spirit, he said; the Government moved in the matter in a religious spirit, and it was in that spirit that he sought the co-operation of all, in the eradication of a long-standing and obstinate custom.

#### ABOLITION OF DEVADASI SYSTEM

7th. AUGUST :—The Bill for the abolition of the Devadasi system, introduced to-day by Miss *G. Ammannappa Raja*, was referred to a Select Committee, the *Prime Minister* not moving his motion for circulation of the Bill.

Mr. *Abdul Hameed Khan* sought leave of the House to introduce his Bill for the prohibition of the publication of news regarding horse races.

The Rules under the Sales Tax Act were considered and approved with a few minor changes.

#### RACE NEWS PROHIBITION BILL

8th. AUGUST :—By 124 votes to 24 to-day, the House refused leave to Mr. *Abdul Hamid Khan* (Moslem League) to introduce his Bill prohibiting the publication of race news. Dr. *P. Subbarayan*, Minister for Law, opposing the grant of leave, said that the Government contemplated introducing a measure of the kind proposed by Mr. Hamid Khan at the next session of the Assembly.

#### I. M. S. OFFICERS' POSTS

The Assembly next adopted a resolution recommending to the Government to convey to the Secretary of State for India, its opinion that his recent orders in reserving certain specified posts in the Provinces to I. M. S. officers, were contrary to the spirit of Provincial Autonomy and that the orders should be revoked at once. Mr. *T. T. Krishnamachari*, who moved the resolution, received almost unanimous support. The hon. Dr. *T. S. S. Rajan*, Minister for Public Health, accepting it, on behalf of the Government, congratulated the mover on his able presentation of facts. A public protest against the Secretary of State's orders had become imperative, Dr. Rajan said, with a view to ensuring a measure of real autonomy in the interests of medical administration. He assured the European members that in accepting the resolution, the Government were not actuated by any racial feeling or ill-will. The House then adjourned *sine die*.

### Special Session—Madras—26th. October 1939

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

The Assembly, specially summoned to consider the resolution on the war situation, tabled by the *Premier*, met on the 26th. October 1939 in a tense atmosphere. There was full attendance of members. All the galleries were packed to capacity. Many of the visitors had to return home disappointed as there was not an inch of space left in the visitors' gallery.

After question time, which occupied a few minutes, the Hon'ble Mr. *C. Rajagopalachari*, the *Premier*, stood up amidst cheers from the Congress benches to move his resolution on the war crisis, similar to the one moved by the *Bombay Premier* yesterday word for word.

## MUSLIM LEAGUERS' WALK OUT

The Muslim League Party staged a walkout following the Speaker's disallowance of the party's amendment of the Premier's resolution. Mr. *Hamid Khan*, the leader of the Muslim League party, and twelve members of the party walked out after making a statement in the House.

After the Premier's speech, Mr. *Hamid Khan* rose to move his amendment which 'inter alia' stated that democratic parliamentary system of Government under the present constitution had failed and therefore it was unsuited to the conditions and genius of the people of India and therefore the entire problem of India's future should be wholly reviewed and revised 'de novo' and that the British Government should not make any commitment without the approval and consent of the Muslim League. The *Speaker*, in disallowing the amendment, said that it was not relevant to the resolution before the House. The *Speaker* added if the mover wanted he could bring in a fresh resolution on the lines of the amendment on another non-official day.

Mr. *Hamid Khan*, after making the following statement, walked out, followed by members of his party, numbering 12 :—

"As the amendment of my party was deemed to be out of order by the chair and consequently disallowed, we feel unable to take part in the deliberations on the resolution without stating the policy of the Muslim League in a definite and concrete form of an amendment. Hence, without meaning any disrespect to the chair, we walk out from the House."

Immediately after the Premier had moved the resolution formally, *Kumara-rajah M. A. Muthia Chetty*, Leader of the Opposition, rose on a point of order. He said, according to rule 51 (4) of the Assembly rules, a member while speaking must not reflect upon the conduct of His Majesty the King or the Governor-General. He contended that if it was not possible to have a free discussion without infringing this rule, such a resolution must be ruled out. He added :

"The resolution expresses the regret of this House that the British Government have made India a participant in this war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of India." His contention was that the British Government had not made India a participant in this war. It was His Majesty the King-Emperor who was at war with Germany. The participation of India in the war, he said, was not the result of any action on the part of the British Government, but the direct out-come of His Majesty's action. It was, therefore, impossible to discuss this resolution without casting reflection upon the conduct of His Majesty the King.

The *Speaker* ruled that he did not think that the resolution came within the scope of rule 51 (4) at all. He held there would not be a handicap to the discussion as stated by the Leader of the Opposition. He, therefore, ruled out the point or order. Sir *A. T. Pannirselvam* asked whether the previous sanction of the Governor was obtained to the resolution, as it referred to a state of war between His Majesty and a foreign State.

The *Premier* replied that the sanction of the Governor was obtained both for summoning the Assembly as well as for the resolution. He added it was not a matter connected with relation between His Majesty and Germany, but entirely and solely a matter concerning the people of India.

After moving the resolution the *Premier* referred to the amendment tabled jointly by Mr. *K. Bashyam* and *Srimathi Kutti Ammatu Ammal* (Congress party members) and said that he proposed to accept the same. Speaking on the resolution, the *Premier* referred to the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition and said the theory that if the King-Emperor had declared war all citizen of the nation were also at war, was absolutely correct according to ancient text books of constitutional law. But sometimes upheavals had taken place on account of the "too exact correctness" of that doctrine itself. He stated that various Dominion Parliaments had since the declaration of war considered the very question whether it was right and proper that their people also should be at war with Germany. The Indian people were in a condition in which according to their political status they could be declared to be at war with any body. "Let us not in our sheltered existence imagine that war is a kind of newspaper news. I claim that whatever may be the Constitution and whatever be the law, we the people of India are entitled to consider and examine the question whether there has been a justifiable reason for us to be at war with another people and also whether it is right to follow it up in action. It was right and proper and not only natural

that the people of India, the thinking people of India (laughter) should consider seriously whether it was right after all, and not for the adult people of a country or a shire in England or Scotland but for the whole population of India, to be ordered out immediately unless the matter was explained to them and they knew why they should be at war.

Continuing, the Premier referred to Mahatma Gandhi's first statement at Simla and said that members of the British Parliament welcomed the statement warmly and used Mahatma Gandhi's statement in the debate in the House of Lords to show that Mahatma Gandhi had himself given his spiritual approval to the step taken by the British Government. Mr. Rajagopalachariar said, "Surely if one statement was welcome another also must be welcomed." The Indian people were a large population with a great culture and with a civilisation and a history behind them and if they should be successfully declared to be at war it would have been better if they had been consulted before in the matter. As a mere matter of commonsense and wisdom, apart from humanity and the doctrine of right and wrong, it would have been well if Britain had taken India into confidence. Therefore, the people of India protested against the procedure adopted by the British. The Ministry, said the Premier, had decided to accept the position reached by the Congress Working Committee and to resign. The first reason for the decision was that the people of India keenly felt that it was not right that another Government far away from them should simply decide for the Indian people that they were at war with another country. Not only had the decision that the people of India were at war with Germany been taken without consulting the people either soon after the declaration of war or in connection with the business to be undertaken in the matter, but the British Government had passed laws without consulting the provincial Governments, whereby even the modicum of autonomy allowed to the provinces had been taken away. 'If the provincial Government do not conduct the war each by itself, still there is to-day no other Government in India which can be said to represent democracy or to be working under any form of democracy. Therefore, in the absence of a proper democratic Government at the centre, the various provincial Governments were a handy machinery. Instead of strengthening them, the British Government, through the Secretary of State for India, has taken away the entire power of these Governments in respect of the legislature and the executive in various matters.'

Mr. W. K. M. Langley (European Group) vehemently protested against the summoning of a special session in order to register the fiat of a "caucus" sitting behind closed doors in Wardha which without any responsibility to the electorates presumes to dictate to the assemblies of the various provinces. Proceeding, Mr. Langley objected to the claims of the Congress to represent the whole of India and the Indian continent as "unjustifiable" on plain facts. It was regrettable, he said, that the Congress Party should have rejected the Viceroy's proposals for the formation of a consultative group. He contended that many people well disposed towards Indian aspirations regarded the present situation created by the Congress Party as an attempt to use the difficulties which confronted the British Government not as an occasion to support the defence of the liberties of the world but as an opportunity to squeeze an advantage not for India as a whole but for an extension of the powers of the Congress Party at the expense of other interests in this country.

Mr. K. Bashyam (Congress) moving the amendment standing in the joint names of himself and Srimathi Kutti Ammalu Amma wanted to delete the concluding portion of the Premier's resolution and add the following at the end: 'in view of the failure of the British Government to meet India's just demand on this occasion, and of the far-reaching gravity of the consequences involved in such failure, this Assembly, while expressing its fullest confidence in the Ministry and realising the grave setback to good government and progress in the province which their withdrawal will cause, fully approve of the Ministry's intention to tender its resignation to H. E. the Governor.'

The Premier formally agreed to the amendment.

Mr. M. C. Rajah (Depressed Classes), opposing the Premier's resolution, said that the people of India ought to be really thankful to the Viceroy for his declaration. The war in which Britain was now engaged had been undertaken by her at stupendous self-sacrifice for promoting the cause of freedom and democracy in the world. It was the recognition of this fact which prompted Gandhi to say that he would give unconditional support to the British Government in this war. The

Congress would have done well if it had followed "this wise lead." He disputed the Congress claim to represent all the minorities. He suggested that even as matters stood to-day the various parties in the country should meet together and frame an agreed constitution and ask the British Government to accept it.

Mr. *Bashier Ahmed Sayeed* (Muslim Independent) acclaimed the Congress Working Committee's decision calling upon the Congress ministries to resign as a right and appropriate reply to the Viceroy's unfortunate declaration. The resolution, he affirmed, was quite in conformity with the objects of the Muslim League as well. "Let us not miss the wood for the tree," he said, and added there was absolutely no necessity for any Muslim to be aggrieved over this resolution.

Replying to the debate, the *Premier* expressed his gratitude and appreciation of the kind words uttered by more than one member of the opposition in regard to what the Congress had done hitherto. "We have been carrying on a just administration," continued the Premier, "and we have done everything necessary for the protection of the claims of the minorities and we were not unfair to anybody." Referring to the criticism that the Congress had claimed for itself the right to decide the future Constitution of India, he said: "the Congress is not claiming any such thing; on the contrary the Congress stated that the people of India should decide what her constitution should be and in so many terms it was made clear to the Viceroy and the world that the Congress is not claiming for itself the right to make a constitution. Mr. Rajagopalachariar continued: If a proper Central Government had been created on right lines, whether for the immediate present or for all time and if that Government had asked the provincial Governments particular powers on the ground that the transfer would be more convenient in the present situation, then the position would have been wholly different. Proceeding, the Premier referred to the Congress demand and said that the declaration asked for was not one considered as a *quid pro quo* for service to be rendered. India did not ask for assessors' verdict as to her fitness as to whether Indians were sufficiently united, sufficiently agreed among themselves and sufficiently strong. They asked what the British Government's intention would be when the Indian people agreed among themselves and united together. But the declaration as made had not only been disappointing, but had caused great resentment among the people. Mr. Rajagopalachariar rejected the proposal of a Consultative Committee in connection with war work. Great Britain could have, if they willed, brought into existence a condition giving colour and flavour of sincerity and actuality to their intention at present and thus speed the working of the war machinery in the country. This would have enabled the provincial Governments to bring the people of the countryside in touch with them. Concluding, the Premier appealed to the members of the Opposition that on a critical occasion like the present they should all fall in line with them, sinking all differences. "This resolution will be the glimpse of the full freedom and unity of India. Britain has told us our disease and it is for us to find the remedy. We are entitled on behalf of India to say that we cannot go on like this. Thinking people are agreed that we should proceed as we have decided to. It was not as if the resignation did not involve much sacrifice. It did involve enormous amount of sacrifice. We have undertaken a great responsibility and I want the House to give its unqualified approval to the resolution."

The joint amendment of Mr. *K. Bashyam* and *Srimathi Kutti Ammal* was accepted by the Premier. The House then adjourned *sine die*.

## The Madras Legislative Council

August Session—Madras—7th. to 9th. August 1939

### THE TEMPLE-ENTRY INDEMNITY BILL

The August session of the Madras Legislative Council commenced its session at Madras on the 7th. August 1939 under the presidency of the hon. Dr. *T. T. Sankar Reddy*. The Temple-Entry Authorisation and Indemnity Bill, as passed by the Assembly, was introduced by the Premier, Mr. *C. Rajagopalachariar*, who moved that the Bill be taken into consideration.

The motion was opposed by the Right Hon'ble *V. S. Srinivasa Sastri* and Mr. *T. C. Srinivasa Iyengar*, while Sir *K. V. Reddi* supported it.

Prefacing his forty-minute speech, which was heard with rapt attention, with the statement that he was a friend of the Temple-Entry movement and that the reform should be effected with the least possible delay, Mr. *Sastri* said that the present legislation for the purpose was a highly irregular and improper method to achieve a great social reform. He urged that a Government which lightly introduced an indemnity Bill to carry out a piece of social reform, was not to be trusted with the power of declaring whether in a given case the trustees' opinion was formed on proper or sufficient grounds. Mr. *Sastri* characterised the Bill as a legislation superseding and cancelling the Malabar Temple-Entry Act; and asked whether this "supplementary" method, as the Premier called it, carried with it the guarantee that it would be unattended not merely by any physical disturbance but by what was far more important, discontent of the heart, which could not express itself. If the principle of the present Bill was conceded, Mr. *Sastri* feared, there was nothing to prevent the Ministers from applying it to agrarian and economic reform, having regard to the huge and "servile" majority behind them. Sir *K. V. Reddi*, who followed, complimented Mr. *Sastri* on his "masterly speech"; but observed that it lacked any concrete suggestion. Absolutely no use there was, Sir Kurma observed, in profuse expressions of sympathy for the reform, if they were not translated into tangible action. The Prime Minister, in his view, had done the right thing under the circumstances and deserved public approbation for acting with courage, in dealing with an unfair, unjust and wicked custom. Mr. *T. C. Srinivasa Iyengar*, who also spoke forcefully on the subject, expressed the view that it should not be left to the trustee to gauge public opinion; and it was dangerous. If public opinion was to be ascertained by means other than the ballot-box, he suggested that a representative commission might be set up for the purpose. The discussion was not over, when the House adjourned till the next-day, the 8th. August, when Mr. *A. Rangaswami Iyengar* stressed the fine spade-work that had been done by the reformers in Madura and characterised the opposition to the measure as engineered. The hon. Mr. *T. Prakasam* supported the Bill, while Mr. *N. R. Samiappa Mudaliar*, Leader of the Opposition, gave vent to a feeling that the Bill was intended "to divert attention from the policy of the Government which had created misgivings in the public mind." In the course of a fighting speech, the hon. Mr. *C. Rajagopalachariar* replied to the various points made by the Opposition speakers. While expressing his gratitude to Mr. *Srinivasa Sastriar* for having defended the issue of the Ordinance, the Prime Minister said that he was as solicitous as Mr. *Sastriar* that the means must be worthy of the end. He referred again to the binding character of the Poona Pact and concluded with an appeal to the members on the other side to throw their full weight on the side of the reform and to get all the temples opened when the Bill was passed. The motion that the Bill be taken into consideration was passed and all the clauses were approved. After Mr. *Srinivasa Sastriar* had further explained his attitude and the Prime Minister had replied during the third reading, the Bill was passed into law. The Council then adjourned.

#### RISE IMPORTS FROM BURMA

The Council to-day passed the following resolution moved by Sir *K. V. Reddi* :

"This Council recommends to the Government to urge upon the Government of India the importance and necessity of their not finally entering into any Trade Agreement with Burma without communicating beforehand the proposed terms to this Government and without obtaining the views of this Government and of the Legislature of this Province on any proposed terms regarding the imports of Burma rice into this Province and further to request the Government of India to reserve to themselves certain amount of control over the imports of Burma rice into India generally and into this province particularly."

In moving the resolution, Sir *K. V. Reddi* said that the resolution requested the Madras Government to induce the Government of India to inform them of the terms of the negotiations that were being carried on, so that they might express their opinion on the points. He said he need not emphasise the importance of improving the economic condition of the Province. They were all agreed that about 80 per cent of the population in this Province was rural and that 70 per cent of the population lived on the land, that the conditions of the ryots

were miserable, that the ryots were chronically indebted and that some attempts should be made to improve their conditions. Attempts had been made and were being made by the present Government but the step that he had suggested was another step in the same direction. Opening the Industrial Museum in Madras, the Minister for Revenue was reported to have stated that the Government intended to bring all the resources at their command to enable agriculturists to receive a fair return for their labour and to ensure to them a fair economic price for paddy and other cereals. If the member would say so, it was the right policy to be adopted and the whole country would be indebted to the Revenue Minister if this policy was implemented by effective practical steps. Restriction of the import of Burma rice was the first step in that direction. Sir K. V. Reddi next pointed out that the production of rice occupied an important place as compared with the other products. Taking rice, wheat, sugarcane, oilseeds and cotton, the five principal products of the country, they would find that rice occupied the first place. Taking the figures for 1932-1933, rice accounted for 277.6 crores of rupees or a percentage of 51.72 of the total value of the agricultural produce of India. Wheat accounted for 47.48 crores or a percentage of nine, oilseeds for 40.94 or eight per cent, sugarcane for 37.33 crores or seven per cent and cotton for 22.23 crores or four per cent. Rice had the most important economic value and yet it had not received any protection from the Government of India. On the other hand, wheat and sugarcane had received protection at their hands.

Mr. Giri then made this brief statement :

"The subject of imports of Burma rice has been under correspondence with the Government of India since December 1937. The Government are in full sympathy with the object underlying the resolution. It is the desire of this Government to restrict the imports of rice from Burma with a view to raise the price level of local rice, consistent with the interests of the consumer.

"Since, however, these restrictions cannot be imposed so long as India and Burma (Trade Regulation) Order, 1937, is in force, the Government of India were requested to terminate the operation of the Order at the earliest opportunity, i. e., 1st April 1940, by giving notice of termination to the Governor of Burma not later than 31st March 1939.

"In response to our representations, the Government of India have replied recently, stating that when the actual trade negotiations with Burma are opened, it is the intention of the Government of India to consult all the interests concerned before any decisive step was taken. They have further assured the Government of Madras that not only will the representations this Government have already made be taken into account but also that this Government will be given an opportunity to make further representations before any conclusive action is taken."

Speaking on the merits of the subject, the hon. Mr. S. Ramanathan, Minister for Public Information, who followed, said that there was no doubt whatever that the quantity of rice that was imported into this Province reacted adversely on the prosperity of the people as a whole. The quantity of rice imported might not be much. That quantity might even be necessary. But it was a fact that it depressed the price level of this commodity, so essential for the well-being of the Province, out of all proportions, and affected vitally the economic condition of the people. It was well-known that all the necessary quantity of paddy was not grown in this Province, because production of paddy was uneconomic. Agriculture, like any other industry, was a profession. A man took to a profession and continued in it, only if he could get a decent livelihood. It was common ground between him and Sir Kurma that there was no necessity whatever for this Province to import any rice from any foreign country, much less from Burma. What was it that they saw in Burma? As Sir Kurma stated, there were peculiar natural advantages for the cultivation of paddy in Burma. Madras had to construct dams, canals, channels and irrigation systems; and had to impose irrigation cess towards the cost of their maintenance. In Burma there was no need for costly irrigation projects. Again, people from Madras were agricultural labourers in Burma; they were allowed to go there under a shortsighted policy. The rice produced by them was exported to Madras to create more unemployment here.

The resolution was put to the House and passed. The Council then adjourned sine die.



# The U. P. Legislative Assembly

Monsoon Session—Lucknow—12th. to 22nd. July 1939

## SHIA-SUNNI TANGLE

The Monsoon session of the U. P. Legislative Assembly commenced at Lucknow on the 12th. July 1939. Five adjournment motions were moved. Four of them dealt with the police firing in Cawnpore on June 20 and one with the police firing at Imambara Asafai on July 6. Of the first four, Mr. *Abdul Hakim*, Deputy Speaker, admitted the first moved by Mr. *Muhammad Ishaq Khan*, while the other three were withdrawn. He also admitted the fifth moved by Mr. *Ali Zaheer*. The Premier, *Pandit G. B. Pant*, opposed the motions as their discussion on the floor of the House would be prejudicial to the public interest. He regretted that the police had to resort to firing. Mr. *Ali Zaheer's* adjournment motion to discuss the police firing at Imambara Asafai on July 6 was withdrawn after a discussion lasting one and a half hours. The Muslim League members did not support the motion nor did it receive support from any other quarter. All sections of the House unanimously expressed the wish that the Shia-Sunni tangle should be ended as soon as possible. The Premier, *Pandit G. B. Pant*, deeply deplored the firing and said: "There have arisen occasions in every country in the world when the administration had to countenance measures which became inevitable in order to ward off greater danger. That alone could be justification for such action." The Premier appealed to Muslim leaders to exert their influence to bring about a settlement of the present dispute and assured the House that if two-thirds of the Sunni and Shia members of the Legislature arrived at a formula, the Government would pay the greatest respect to it. The Premier added that he would like to meet Muslim members of the Assembly in this connection.

The Assembly, adopted a resolution demanding that the Federal Legislature should control production and distribution of drugs, medicines and biological products.

The House passed the Employments Tax Bill as amended by the Upper House. The House also adopted the Consolidation of Holdings Bill as amended by the Council, the Maternity Benefit Amendment Bill and the Oudh Laws Amendment Bill.

## COWNPUR POLICE FIRING

14th. JULY:—The police firing in Cawnpore on June 19 last, where there was communal rioting in that city, was discussed to-day when Mr. *Ishaq Khan*, Muslim Leaguer, moved an adjournment motion. The motion was ultimately talked out. The Premier, *Pandit G. B. Pant*, replying to criticisms of the Government's policy, refuted the arguments of Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan and asked if the firing and the riots had not taken place in Cawnpore previously and the Nawabzada was not aware of them. The Premier admitted that he could not say that he was satisfied with the work of each, and every police required a lot of overhauling, but at the same time to impute drastic things to Cawnpore police would be highly unfair. Referring to the Nawab of Ohhatari's demand for an impartial public inquiry, *Pandit Pant* reminded the House of the Tanda enquiry to conduct which Mr. Justice Yorke had been appointed at the express understanding that the Muslim League would co-operate. But later on, when the League found that nothing would be covered up, they backed out on a lame excuse. "We will think of holding an enquiry if you are really earnest about it," concluded the Premier. A Hindu woman was shot and wounded by a police constable on patrol duty in Benares on June 5 and on a magisterial enquiry, it was held that the firing was not justified and hence a case had been instituted. The Premier further stated that all Government servants, whether in the police or otherwise, were strictly enjoined and reminded to observe strict impartiality in dealing with the public and warned that any one found to have communal bias would be regarded as having committed a serious breach of discipline and punished accordingly.

## AGRICULTURISTS DEBT REDEMPTION BILL

17th. to 19th. JULY :—An important change, providing for redemption of usufructuary mortgages and for cancellation of mortgages of over 30 years was passed to-day when the debate was resumed on the Agriculturists' and Workmen's Debt Redemption Bill. Next day, the 18th. July, the House passed the second reading of the Bill, after which, on a motion of the Revenue Minister, the Regulation of Credit Bill was referred to a Select Committee. Next day, the 19th. July, the Assembly passed the Agriculturists and Workmen's Debt Redemption Bill. The House agreed to reject the amendment suggested by the Upper House seeking to repeal the clause of the Tenancy Laws Amendment Bill relating to transfer of certain cases pending before civil courts to revenue courts.

## ARREARS OF RENT REMISSION BILL

The House thereafter took up consideration of the Arrears of Rent Remission Bill. In the course of the first reading, the Oppositionists alleged that the Government were dealing unfairly with the zamindars. The proper authorities, it was contended, would be moved, to declare the measure illegal as being against the provisions of the Government of India Act. Mr. V. D. Tripathi uttered a warning that the kisan agitation, which was now seething underneath, would flare up, and swallow the zamindars if they maintained their present attitude. Next day, the 20th. July, the Assembly passed the Bill, by which arrears of rent, the recovery of which had been stayed by recent legislation, would be remitted except in the case of persons who were expected to be able to pay their arrears without hardship. Speaking on the motion for consideration of the Bill, the Premier, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant said that his inquiries showed that arrears as shown in the zamindars' books were not always genuine, but were more or less fictitious ones. Wherever there were real arrears of rent these were due to utter inability of the tenants to pay. If those arrears were wiped out, there would not be much harm to zamindars. Inquiries showed that the benefits of rent remission did not reach the tenants in all cases, but the zamindars alone derived the benefit of remission of revenue in various districts.

Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Minister for Local Self-Government, next introduced the District Boards (Second Amendment) Bill.

## ENCUMBERED ESTATES AMEND. BILL

21st. JULY :—The House passed to-day the Encumbered Estates Amendment Bill as amended by the Council. Two amendments moved by the Opposition were rejected.

On the motion of Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Minister for Local Self-Government, the District Boards (Second Amendment) Bill was referred to a Select Committee.

The House also accepted the amendments made by the Upper House in the U. P. Indian Medicine Bill.

After the introduction of the Motor Vehicles Taxation Amendment Bill, the House adjourned.

## NEW ROAD PROGRAMME

22nd. JULY :—The monsoon session of the Assembly concluded to-day after a sitting forced on the Government by non-official members desirous of ventilating the views of their constituencies regarding roads which should be included in the new road programme of the Government to be financed by a loan.

## MONEY-LENDERS' BILL

The Government took advantage of the additional sitting to move consideration of the Moneylenders' Bill as amended by a select committee. Important changes made in the Bill by the select committee were few. After a great deal of study of provincial and other enactments, the committee finally decided to use the definition of "moneylender" taken from the English Moneylenders Act of 1900. This definition stood the test of time and apparently achieved the purpose for which it was intended—of distinguishing between moneylending transactions and ordinary business transactions. Another change made in the Bill provided that a moneylender shall also maintain a proper account of loans advanced before the commencement of the Act. The Bill as amended by the select committee was passed.

## ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Discussion of the road development programme gave an opportunity to two dozen members to state the point of view of their constituencies. These were

some members who tried to lift their argument beyond the parochial view. Mr. *Tahir Hussain* suggested that Lucknow should be linked to Neoti by road to enable people to eat the mangoes of Neoti. Mr. *Phool Singh* thought that the road connecting Lhaksar with Najibabad via Hardwar would serve triple purpose of linking the U. P. with the Punjab, providing an additional outlet for heavy traffic during *melas* at Hardwar and better communications for the sugar cane area. Mr. *Fagooq* felt that some Ministers' home constituencies would fare better under the road programme than other deserving areas. He and Mr. *Mohanlal Gauram* drew particular attention to the claims of Gorakhpur which had half the number of sugar mills in the province and needed road communications. Mr. *Mahabir Tyagi* put in a forceful plea for the Ministry. He thought that ever since the time of the Emperor Sher Shah, a new road programme was always first to touch the imagination of the people. He asked critics to take a composite view of the proposed structure and not judge it by individual items. He made an interesting suggestion—that while fixing stones denoting miles the Government should carve on these stones some national slogans, including those preaching the gospel of prohibition. Mr. *Hafiz Ibrahim*, summing up, gave an assurance that the various suggestions for including roads in the programme would be examined and that some of these which were reasonable would be accepted. Thereafter the Assembly adjourned *sine die*.

## October Session—Lucknow—3rd. Oct. to 30th. October 1939

### FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PROVINCE

An important statement on the financial position of the province was made by the Education Minister when the Assembly, commenced its October session at Lucknow on the 3rd. October 1939.

The hon. Mr. *Sampurnanand*, Education Minister, speaking on behalf of the Premier, made a statement on the financial position of the province. He refuted criticisms in certain quarters that the Government, either due to delay or weakness in the credit of the Government, had failed to float the proposed loans before the war broke out and pointed out how the Reserve Bank had drawn up a time-table for Provincial and Central Government loans based not on the credit of the Governments concerned but on a consideration of their requirements. Owing to the rapidly changing international situation, the Reserve Bank was compelled to change the time-table. Thus neither their credit nor any question of Government's unpreparedness had anything to do with the flotation of the proposed loans. To meet the situation that had arisen due to failure to get a loan, the Government had to cut expenditure, said Mr. *Sampurnanand*. The Government departments were subjected to scrutiny and appreciable savings in this year's budget had been effected without starving the nation-building activities. The Government last week floated one crore worth of Treasury Bills and were keeping in close touch with the Government of India and the Reserve Bank. Opposition speakers, led by Sir J. P. *Pravastava* and the *Nawab of Chhattari*, wanted an opportunity to discuss this statement also and the Government agreed to grant time for it after the conclusion of consideration of the Tenancy Bill.

### THE TENANCY BILL

4th. OCTOBER :—The labours of the Government, spread over a period of two years, bore fruit to-day when one of the most important though contentious pieces of legislation initiated by them, namely, the Tenancy Bill, was adopted by the Assembly, incorporating the amendments made by the Council.

During the last two days, the House disposed of with lightning rapidity about five hundred amendments made by the Upper House. Members of the Opposition including Raja Bishweshwar Dayal, the Nawab of Ohhattari and Nawab Sir. Mahomed Yusuf criticised the measure while the official spokesmen stressed how the Bill kept the balance even between the zamindars and the tenant.

### FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE PROVINCE

5th. OCTOBER :—A reassertion of the fact that the finances of the United Provinces were perfectly sound and the non-flotation by the U. P. Government of the proposed loan of two crores was not due to any delay on the part of the Government or weakness of credit in the money market was made by the Acting Finance Minister, Mr. *Sampurnanand*, replying to a general discussion to-day

over his financial statement made on Tuesday last. Opposition speakers led by Sir. J. P. Srivastava, Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, the Nawab of Chhattari, and Captain Pocock criticised the Government for not floating the loan before the war. They said that the Government thereby had put the province to loss by way of interest of nearly Rs. 90 lakhs. Mr. Sampurnanand, replying to questions raised by the speakers, explained how since June the Provincial and Central Governments had been in the market for loans, Madras and Central Provinces floating loans on June 21, the Government of India on July 5 and the Punjab on August 16 and war was declared in September. Dealing with the history of the Government's indebtedness for which the proposed loan had become necessary, the Minister said that on April 1, 1937, when Provincial Autonomy was inaugurated, they were saddled with a deficit of Rs. 33 crores. He unfolded the Government's programme to effect economies this year which aggregated to Rs. 60 to 70 lakhs.

#### POWER ALCOHOL BILL

The Power Alcohol Bill, as passed by the Upper House, was next adopted. Dr. N. K. Katju, Minister for Justice, moving consideration of the Bill pointed out that it would result in great benefit to the province, where about seven million gallons of petrol were consumed. He added that mixture of 20 per cent power alcohol with portol as recommended by experts was innocuous and it was expected that sixteen lakhs of gallons of petrol would be displaced by power alcohol. The measure would also provide employment to a large number of youngsters.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

27th. OCTOBER :—One of the most momentous sessions of the Assembly, specially summoned to discuss the war resolution met to-day. All the Ministers excepting the Premier, who came in after question time, and almost all the members were present in their seats, while the galleries, including the ladies' galleries, were packed to capacity and the approaches to the Chamber were thronged by visitors.

The Premier rose at 12-40 to move his resolution. As he was still in indifferent health, the Speaker suggested that he might speak sitting. The Premier thanked the House for the welcome they had accorded him and the courteous consideration and generosity that had always been shown to him by every individual member of the House. He then moved the war resolution.

Raja Biseshwar Dayal, raising a point of order, contended that under rules 33 and 36 and Standing Order No. 17 the resolution was out of order inasmuch as they could make no reference to the action or conduct of His Majesty the King Emperor. His Excellency the Viceroy or the Governor. The Speaker ruled out the point of order.

Commending the resolution to the House, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant said it was of surpassing importance and earnestly hoped that the vital problems with which it dealt would be discussed in an atmosphere free from anger, passion or bitterness and with a just and correct appreciation of the momentous and far-reaching nature of the issues involved. The resolution consisted of three paragraphs, of which the first and the third voiced the feelings of regret which certain acts of the British Government and the statement issued by the Viceroy on October 17 had produced in the minds of the people of this country. The second paragraph contained concrete proposals and it was to this he should like to invite the attention of the House. Indians were told that the war was being fought for putting an end to aggression, for making the world safe for democracy, for saving the people of the world from the bondage of fear and for ensuring settled peace. The Prime Minister of England had stated in a speech just a fortnight ago that surrender to wrong-doing would spell the extinction of all hope and the annihilation of all those values of life which had, through the centuries, been at once the mark and inspiration of human progress. The passage from Mr. Chamberlain's speech had also been quoted by the Viceroy in his recent declaration of the war aims of the allies. The attitude of India as regards the main points at issue was perfectly clear, said Pandit Pant. Nationalist opinion in this country had been and was sternly opposed to Nazism and as the statement of the Congress Working Committee had repeatedly declared, it was an entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit.

The Congress had similarly condemned the aggression in which the Nazis and Facists repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well established principles and recognised standards of civil behaviour. The Working Committee had also unhesitatingly condemned the latest aggression of the German Government against Poland and expressed its genuine sympathy with those who were its victims. The people of India, as had been abundantly made clear by the Congress, were interested in the suppression and elimination of all those systems and methods which resulted directly in human degradation and the imposition of alien will and domination of any people, since all these tended not only to the demoralisation and weakening of the victims of such methods but ultimately recoiled also on the aggressor. "Let us then fully appreciate", added Pandit Pant, "the character and implications of the malady which has gripped the world and from which it has to be saved. Let us also take note of the objective which all those interested in establishing genuine peace and preserving human dignity and freedom desire. India shares the views and the aspirations of those who are so interested and it is the duty of us all to determine how this objective can and should be achieved." Pandit Pant dealt with the equilibrium that was to be in the international sphere and said that if the principles of democracy and freedom were to prevail then independence of India must be accepted as a condition precedent to the fulfilment of this noble purpose. "When, therefore, we ask for a declaration and recognition of the principle of Indian independence, we are neither bargaining nor meaning any selfish advantage. We are as much interested as any other country in the peace and happiness of humanity and it is as much our right as our duty to see it that the sacrifices which unworldly people are asked to make bear rich fruit and the noble and inspiring slogans which experienced politicians employ to secure the co-operation of the general public are fully respected. It was for that we insisted on a declaration of Indian independence, the recognition of the principle of self-determination for India. It was in the interest of Britain and France that India should attain independence. It is in the interest of England that she should realise this, as the sands of time are running short. She had already generated enough bitterness against herself in this land and it will not be to her advantage if, after becoming free, India carries with her bitter memories of her association with England. It is unthinkable that this land of ours, with its civilisation, with its traditions and with such a large population, should be expected to continue as a vassal of an insular state thousand of miles away from her. There is yet room for friendship. There may be even room for partnership, provided we allow reason to prevail against any prejudice and racial arrogance and provided we practice the principles we profess; as Hitler has been told, 'not words, but deeds are needed'. We do not want any new constitution to be evolved while the war is on, not that this is impossible".

Pandit Pant characterised the accusation that the Congress was bargaining as a travesty of facts. Why should they be blamed if they said that if their co-operation was called for, it would be available, provided that it was made worth their while in the national as well as in the international interest to offer it? "We are ready", he declared, "to make sacrifices in common with England, if she so chooses, for making the world safe for democracy but if she spurns this offer and rejects the proffered hand of fellowship, we will make those sacrifices in such other effective ways as will ensure fulfilment of the purpose we have in view." Referring to Mr. Chamberlain's statement that the new order would be based on mutual confidence and mutual trust, the Premier said, "This is the trust that has been reposed in us. Even the Government of India Act of 1935 has been amended in the teeth of the opposition of the country, of the Congress and the Muslim League and of most of the Governments—not only in matters legislative but even in matters executive. The Viceroy had made a statement which could have been left unmade and which was received with a chorus of disappointment, not unmixed with indignation, all over the country. The preamble to the Act of 1919 was condemned and looked upon with extreme disfavour and resentment by Nationalist India when it was introduced. The policy declared by Lord Irwin in 1929 led to the movement for national emancipation in 1930. "The Act of 1935 was rejected by all of us", continued Pandit Pant, "and we had resolutions first in the Central Assembly and later in all the Provincial Assemblies for its replacement by a constitution framed through the self-determination of the people of India. Yet the Viceroy, instead of going forward, asks us to go back to the year 1919 and to be satisfied with what we were then told and to treat this as a great boon which should inspire Indians to throw their lives into this Armageddon. To add insult to injury, we are told

that the responsibility is ours that there are differences among us and that these must be borne in mind. It is sad to think that our differences should be exploited."

Pandit Pant refuted the charge that the Congress had no right to speak for India, and observed that the Congress did not claim any privilege for itself. The Congress wanted a democratic system. It wanted the popular voice to prevail. Any reference to internal differences was really irrelevant. Independence had to be determined vis a vis Great Britain. The vital issue was whether England was prepared to accept the right of India for self-determination. "We are determined to achieve the aims which we have set before us and we are prepared to adopt every honourable course to put an end to the process of suppression which is in alliance with the forces of reaction and is responsible for the moral anarchy that is prevailing in the world, so that humanity may go on advancing through liberty, equality and fraternity", concluded the Premier.

*Raja Bishweshwar Dayal Seth* moved the deletion of the original resolution and its substitution by the following :—

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them, to His Majesty's Government that this Assembly assures them of its full co-operation in the prosecution of the war which Great Britain has declared on Germany in order to combat German aggression and to destroy the menace to the peace of the world.

"This Assembly further urges upon His Majesty's Government the desirability of taking steps soon after the termination of the war for making the necessary changes in the Government of India Act of 1935 to the satisfaction of the people of India, including landlords and other classes and minorities, in order that India may attain Dominion Status as early as possible" (Odes of Shame).

*Raja Bishweshwar Dayal* said that the resolution moved by the Premier was unfortunate and he had thereby done a disservice to the motherland. He did not mean that the Premier did not have patriotism or love for his country. The Premier and his followers of the Congress had as much patriotism and love of the country as they on the Opposition side had. But merely depending on sentiment would result in destruction. The Premier's resolution had been drafted in a bargaining spirit. England was to-day involved in a life and death struggle and India was consequently also involved in it. The Congress demand embodied in the resolution was inappropriate at the present moment and unconditional support should be extended to Britain during the present crisis. He blamed the Congress for the present situation in the country and refuted the claim of the Congress to represent the whole country, as it did not represent Muslims and other minorities. The Congress Government had alienated the sympathies of practically every section of the country.

*Choudhury Khaliquzzaman*, Leader of the Moslem League Party in the Assembly, next moved the League amendment.

*Mr. Govind Malaviya*, rising on a point of order, contended that the amendment was a substantive motion and had nothing to do with the resolution before the House.

The *Speaker* expressed his readiness to give an opportunity to members to move as many amendments as possible but felt that the present one was far away from the subject matter of the original resolution and he asked the Choudhury Sahib to confine himself to the relations of India to war.

*Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman* contended that the resolution was not confined to war; for instance, it asked for a constitution for India and for the application of the principles of democracy. Their point of view was that the Congress claim embodied in their resolution did not fit in with their claim and so they wanted the whole question to be revised *de novo*.

The *Speaker* pointed out that the amendment omitted to deal with the factum of the war and the attitude of the province to the prosecution of the war. This was ignored and the amendment dealt with the general constitutional changes.

*Choudhury Khaliquzzaman* stressed that his amendment was perfectly in order. The *Speaker* said his reading of the resolution told him that the amendment as drafted was not quite in order and he urged the Choudhury Sahib to give him another amendment which would, in some manner, connect the subject of war with it.

The *Choudhury Sahib* felt that there was no alternative left for him and the members of his party but to walk out.

The *Speaker*, however, gave him five minutes time to frame another amendment and submit it to him, which he agreed to do.

The other members of the League Party declined to move the amendment standing in their names, stating that the League amendment held the field. Choudhury Khaliqzaman submitted a revised amendment which read as follows : -

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to His Majesty's Government that they should, when considering the question of India's constitution, either during the duration of the war or after it is concluded, to bear in mind that the democratic parliamentary system of government under the present constitution has failed and was utterly unsuited to the condition and genius of the people and therefore, apart from the Government of India Act of 1935, the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly reviewed and revised *de novo* and that the British Government should not make any commitment in principle or otherwise, without the approval and consent of the All-India Muslim League, which alone represents and can speak on behalf of the Mussalmans of India."

Mr. Govind Malaviya and the hon. Dr. K. N. Katju felt that this amendment also was not in order.

The Speaker, however, allowed it. Speaking on the amendment, Choudhury Khaliqzaman recalled that Mahatma Gandhi, after his visit to Delhi, had expressed sympathy for the cause for which Britain was fighting. Mr. Nehru had also given expression to similar sentiments. That meant that the ideal for which Britain was fighting was not so bad then as it was now made out to be. It had been his considered opinion that as soon as they came to a settlement, they would not have to pass resolutions but would get whatever they demanded. Replying to a Congress member who asked what were his terms for a settlement, Choudhury Khaliqzaman said that he would state them only when the Congress had discarded their old notions.

Dr. Manik Chand Jatav Vir moved an amendment seeking to add the following at the end of the League resolution: "As well as without the consent of other important minorities and special interests." This was accepted by the League members.

The Nawab of Chhattari, supporting the League resolution, asked whether during their two and a half years' tenure, the Congress Government had created a suitable atmosphere in this country. Were the rich and the poor, the depressed classes, the zamindars and the intelligentsia, not to talk of Muslims, satisfied? If they had created such an atmosphere, they were entitled to put their resolution before the House. If that condition was not created in the province, then, as Choudhury Khaliqzaman had said, it was not inopportune to bring such a resolution before the House. The House then adjourned.

28th. OCTOBER :—An explanation that the Moslem League was not opposed to democracy but only to that form of it which was embodied in the Act of 1935 was given to-day by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, general secretary of the All-India Moslem League, in answer to the repeated charges levelled by Congress speakers that the League was betraying the Islamic ideal of democracy.

After question hour, three adjournment motions were ruled out and the House resumed the debate on the resolution. The Nawab of Chhattari, Leader of the Independent Party, affirmed that Mr. Jinnah had taken a stand on behalf of all minority interests. He pleaded that India was fighting the war entirely in her own interest.

Acharya Narendra Deo, the Socialist leader, said that he was pained at the attitude of the Moslem League. Islam had given the world a message of democracy. If Islam could get converts in Indian soil, why should democracy not be planted in India. Members of the Moslem League, Acharya Deo continued, were untrue to the spirit of Islam because like the Hindu Sabha they represented a vested class which was apprehensive of the growing power of democracy through Congress. Continuing, Acharya Deo said the truth was that the Moslem League opposition was solely due to the fact that the Congress Cabinet did not include Moslem League members. He asserted that the Congress would be happy to have all six Ministers from Moslems, provided they took office not in the spirit of reformists but of revolutionaries, who would establish democracy in the country. He concluded "Come and occupy these Treasury Benches. We shall go into the wilderness two hundred times but the Congress will have for this country nothing but democratic self-government."

Sir *Jwala Prasad Srivastava* admitted that there was a good deal in the resolution with which he was in sympathy. He stood for India's freedom as much as members on the Ministerial benches. But his objection to the resolution was that it was moved at the wrong time. If the Congress agreed with the objects of the war they ought to extend their support to Britain without imposing any conditions or asking for any price. Pandit *Ramakant Malaviya* made a fervent plea for inter-communal unity at this hour of crisis in the country. Sir *Mohammed Yusuf* regretted that Government had allowed their propagandist mentality to get the better of their judgment. Mr. *Mohabir Tayagi* accused the League of worshipping power. Mr. *Aziz Ahmed*, in a strong rejoinder, said Moslems would not live on the charity of the Hindu majority but as free citizens of a free State. Captain *Pocock*, representing the European point of view, emphasized the profound significance of the Viceroy's declaration. Answering those who had complained that the consent of India had not been taken for participation in the war, he said, "security and defence of India is the responsibility to-day of the British Government; and there could be no question of the consent of people to take action to defend their country from invasion and attack". Referring to the need for unity, Capt. Pocock said: "This Government has had every opportunity during the two and a half years to achieve better understanding among many political parties in the province but with what result? Division remains more clear cut than before. It is only reasonable that minority parties reading into the wording of the resolution might suspect the motive that the Congress party wished to become more dominant than at present." Continuing, the Speaker said the Congress should have asked for clarification but the constitutional crisis it was forcing was an act unworthy of the people whom the Congress represented and was contrary to the wishes of the masses.

Mr. *Sampurnanand*, Minister, declared that so long as Congress did not ask for sectional advantage but worked for the freedom of the country as a whole, it would speak for the nation. He complained that the Moslem League had not defined the form of Government it wanted. There was no harm in its opposing parliamentary system of government but it must not disown democracy and put itself in the wrong. *Nawabzada Liaqatali Khan* said the Congress had cajoled the British authorities to recognize it as the sole representative of the nation and it was only when this claim was refused by Britain that it threatened constitutional crisis. Answering critics he said: "Where have we said that we don't stand for independence or that we are against democracy? Our amendment opposes democratic parliamentary government under the present Act. We will resist domination of one community by another. Our complaint against you is exactly the same as your complaint against Great Britain. We want not words but deeds."

Dr. *K. N. Katju*, Minister, regretted that no speaker of the League had defined the attitude towards war. As regards the cry of the minority he said the majority of Moslems lived in provinces having Moslem majority. Where then was the truth in the cry of tyranny over 90 million Moslems. He added: "So far as the masses are concerned if you do not raise the cry of Islam in danger or music before mosque or cow killing if you confine yourself to economic matters, the Moslem League will have no support." *Raja Jagannath Baksh Singh* appealed to Congress not to close the door for negotiation. The House then adjourned till the 30th.

**30th. OCTOBER:—**The Assembly passed to-day by 127 votes to 2, the Congress Ministry's resolution on the war with a slight modification and rejected by 123 votes to 19, the Moslem League amendment.

The two members who voted against the Premier's resolution were Mr. *Desmond Young* and *Raja Bisheshwar Dayal*, while the solitary Moslem League member who was in the House, remained neutral. The Moslem League members left the House after their amendment had been negatived and informed the Speaker that they were going away because it was time to break their fast and not because they meant to be disrespectful to the House. *Raja Bisheshwar Dayal's* resolution for unconditional support to the British Government had the solitary support of its mover.

The Premier announced the acceptance of the amendment of Mr. *Adil Abbasi* providing for effective safeguards for Moslem and other minorities.

Pandit *Govind Ballabh Pant*, on the conclusion of voting, also announced that "in pursuance of the decision taken by the House to-day, we will be submitting our resignation to His Excellency the Governor this evening." This announcement was made the occasion for wild cheering and for shouting of *Congress Moghna*.



The first Moslem member of the Congress party to participate in the debate on the resolution was the Minister for Communications, Mr. *Hafiz Mohamed Ibrahim*. He maintained that nowhere in history had any country achieved freedom after settling internal, communal and religious differences, but that such differences had disappeared as the result of the working of free institutions. Comparing the 52 leaders who had seen the Viceroy to the number of playing cards in a pack, Mr. Ibrahim said the Viceroy had been misled by their different colours and had forgotten that they constitute one pack. Congress, he affirmed, was prepared to satisfy every demand of the minorities for safeguards. His own view was that the demand for safeguards was useless. Islam had spread in India through a handful of men and it was putting Islam to shame by insisting that nine crores of Moslems could not protect their interests. The Moslem League, he continued, had originally supported provincial autonomy whereas Congress had condemned it. What had happened now that the League had gone back on its original declaration? Referring finally to safeguards that would satisfy Moslems, Mr. Ibrahim recalled the recent statement made on the subject by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan to Press representatives that the formation of coalition governments would be such a safeguard. That, he said, revealed the real mentality of the Moslem League.

Rai Sahib *H. P. Tuntia*, a non-party member, representing the depressed classes, urged India in her own interest to support England in resisting German aggression. As to the merits of the constitutional issue he agreed with the Congress that the Viceroy had failed to satisfy the national demand.

Mr. *Karansingh Kame*, Parliamentary Secretary, and representative of the depressed classes, declared that the failure of democracy being due to separate electorates, proved the failure of the Moslem League leadership. The depressed classes believed that with the grant of independence they would get their charter of freedom.

Mr. *Karimul Rasa Khan* was the first speaker from the Moslem League benches to declare that he agreed with that part of the Congress resolution which demanded independence. He expressed the hope that when Congress returned to power, (League voices—they are not going), the Congress Ministry would show large heartedness towards the minorities and not lose their confidence again.

Mr. *Abdul Hakem*, Deputy President and a member of the Congress party, expressed the feeling that the League had committed a blunder by opposing the Ministry's resolution in its entirety. It should have accepted the resolution and moved a proviso asking for safeguards for the minorities. He blamed the aggressive propaganda of the League for the communal tension and for giving strength to the Hindu Mahasabha.

Mrs. *Vijayalakshmi Pandit* asked Moslems whether they wanted at the hands of Britain the type of security she had offered. The Hindu minority in the Moslem provinces had by no means been receiving a fair treatment, she said, but the Congress had not raised its voice because Congress did not stand for sectional interest. "The Moslem League", the Minister stated, "is not being asked to come to terms with the Congress. We do not desire this. Come to terms with the people of India after electing the constituent assembly and if Congress does not fit into the picture it will go out gracefully."

Mr. *Rajaram Sastri*, representing labour, said the Moslem League did not represent labourers and declared that the Moslem members of the Cawnpore Mazdoor Sabha would take orders from the Congress and not from the League.

Mr. *Ali Zakeer*, no-party member, while admitting that the minorities had grievances against the Congress Government, felt that the resolution of the Ministry should be endorsed by every person who stood for the freedom of the country.

Mr. *Suleiman Ansari*, parliamentary secretary to the Premier, declared that the minorities had been dealt with by the Government with extreme generosity.

The closure was moved and accepted, and the Premier replied to the debate. He said that he was glad to note that there was a consensus of opinion in support of the spirit of the resolution. Congress, he emphasized, did not claim anything for Congressmen alone. It claimed the privilege of serving the entire people of this country and to achieve the independence of all classes and all groups. "We want India," he added, "to enjoy freedom." Such being the case, the Premier asked whether there was any ground or justification for complaints and charges levelled against them. "What we ask is the right to serve all and on behalf of all," he added. The same claim could not be made by the Moslem League which was an exclusive organization. The Congress portals were open to Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs, Christians and all others, and it could not be denied that the Congress included Moslems as well.

The Premier sought for a clarification of the aims of the Moslem League *vis à vis* the resolution. He referred to the efforts made by Pandit Nehru and himself with leaders of the Moslem League to bring about an understanding and remove misapprehensions between the communities but without result. He next proceeded to answer the charges made against the U. P. Government. He emphasized that the legislative measures adopted by them had received the support of the Moslem League who had either agreed or acquiesced in them. He drew attention to the attack made on the U. P. Ministry by Mr. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal in the course of a recent statement and countered the charges made therein. The Premier claimed that in whatever work they had undertaken, they had been fair, just and generous to the minorities. The House at this stage adjourned *sine die*.

## The U. P. Legislative Council

Monsoon Session—Lucknow—3rd. to 8th July 1939

### THE INDIAN MEDICINE BILL

The Monsoon session of the U. P. Legislative Council commenced at Lucknow on the 3rd. July 1939. After forty minutes' sitting the House adjourned till the 5th. July when the hon. Mrs. *Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit*, Minister for Public Health, introduced the U. P. Indian Medicine Bill, which sought to control quackery by establishing a Board of Indian Medicine consisting of 27 members representing the various interests and placing Unani and Ayurvedic systems of Medicine on a par with the western systems. The House welcomed the Bill and passed the first reading. The remaining clauses of the Bill were discussed and carried without any modification on the 6th. July. All the amendments moved to-day were withdrawn in the light of the assurance given by the Minister in charge of the Bill. The Council then adjourned.

### MADHE-SAHABA TABARRA CONTROVERSY

5th. JULY :—The Madhe-Sahaba Tabarra controversy came up to-day. The Government stated that 155 Sunnis have been fined in connection with the Madhe Sahaba agitation, and total fines being Rs. 25,000 and odd Shias fined in connection with the Tabarra agitation numbered 3,463 and the amount of fine was over Rs. 59,000. No money has so far been realised and the question of remission of sentences would be considered when the persons concerned applied for it. It was further stated that the Government were aware of the agitation spreading in other parts of the province, although there was no danger of its affecting the neighbouring districts.

An adjournment motion in the name of *Raja Akbar Ali Khan* seeking to discuss the Government's action enforcing "36 hours curfew" on the Shias to-day was dropped after discussion. *Raja Akbar Ali Khan*, explaining the motion, observed that by enforcing twelve-hours' curfew to-day on the Shias, the Government really imposed 36-hours' curfew, as the curfew was already in force at night. *Dr. K. N. Katju*, explaining the Government's position, assured the House that if the Shias gave an undertaking that they would not assemble near the Imambara in the neighbourhood of which the Sunnis were celebrating "urs", the order would be withdrawn. The police authorities were convinced that there would be a breach of the peace if the Shias were allowed to gather.

### POLICE FIRING ON SHIAS

7th. JULY :—Yesterday's police firing on a Shia mob assembled in the Imambara Asafi had an echo to-day when *Syed Agha Hyder* moved an adjournment motion to discuss the incident. The mover regretted that human life was becoming cheaper every day and felt that firing should not have been resorted to on such a flimsy pretext. *Syed Kalbe Abbas* also held that the firing was unjustified. He asserted that he had no faith in a magisterial enquiry and demanded the appointment of an independent tribunal to investigate the matter. He requested the Government of frequent agitations organised by the Congress in similar

occasions before their accepting office. The hon. Dr. K. N. Katju, Minister of Justice, explaining the circumstances leading to the firing, declared that no one regretted the firing more than the Government did, but in extreme cases the authorities had to use discretionary powers. He admitted that one Shia had received serious injuries as a result of the firing. On behalf of the sponsors of the motion, it was urged that an impartial tribunal should be appointed to enquire into the incident. It was also urged that a magisterial enquiry would not serve the purpose. One member characterised such enquiries as a "white-wash." Another member from the Opposition charged the Government with adopting the same methods which they themselves had blamed when they were the victims. It was also alleged that victims of the firing (Shias) were not given a warning. Deploing the firing incident *Pannit Gobind Ballabh Pant*, the Premier, stated that the Government were more anxious than anybody else to see that such incidents were not repeated. The sanctity and dignity of human life should be preserved irrespective of community or class and the Government wanted to see whether anything was left undone which would have prevented the occurrence. Dealing at length with the events of yesterday, the Premier observed that it was necessary to protect a larger number of people from disaster. Greater disaster should be prevented at any cost but action should not be taken unless it was absolutely necessary. On behalf of the Government it was also stated that there must have been some justification for the firing and the Government wanted to get at the root of it. The Premier, in this connection, also appealed to Muslim leaders to see that something was done to put an end to the unfortunate *Madhe bahaba-Tabarra* controversy which had been poisoning the atmosphere of Lucknow for the last many months. The adjournment motion was talked out after a debate lasting two hours.

#### THE TENANCY BILL

During the discussion of the motion of the hon. Mr. *Raif Ahmed Kidwai* that the Tenancy Bill be taken into consideration, leading zamindars watched the proceedings from the President's box. *Rai Bahadur Mohanlal* moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee to report by the end of October 1939. Next day, the 8th. July, the Bill was referred to a select committee after two days' debate with instructions to report within six weeks. During the debate more than one speaker suggested that the Government should purchase zamindaris from landlords and lease them out to tenants. One member declared that there would be no objection from zamindars to the procedure. Mr. *Raif Ahmed Kidwai*, the Minister for Revenue, winding up the debate, said that the Bill was not intended to destroy zamindars as had been alleged, but only "to stop the atrocities of the zamindars." The Bill had no reference to the suggestion gaining ground in many quarters that landlords had played out their time. Members on the Congress benches spoke in favour of the Bill while those on the Opposition criticised the various provisions in the Bill emphasising that they were against the interests of landlords. *Khan Bahadur Masood-uz-Zaman* characterised the Bill as a propaganda measure. In his opinion it conferred no benefit on tenants but would injure the interests of zamindars. When *Rai Bahadur Mohanlal* moved that the question be now put to vote nobody raised a protest and the Bill was referred to a select committee consisting of eight members. The Council then adjourned. *sine die*.

#### Autumn Session—Lucknow—10th. August to 13th. October 1939

##### MEMBERS NOT TO BE HON. MAGISTRATES

The Autumn session of the Council commenced at Lucknow on the 10th. August 1939. A resolution recommending to the Government that no member of the Legislative Council be appointed as an honorary magistrate and the powers of those already appointed be immediately withdrawn, was discussed and adopted. The Revenue Minister then laid on the table the select committee report on the Tenancy Bill after which the Council adjourned till Aug. 21.

##### THE TENANCY ACT AMEND. BILL

21st. AUGUST:—The Council took up the Tenancy Laws (Amendment) Bill in which clause 4 which had been deleted by the Council was restored by the Assembly. This clause provides for the transfer of pending declaratory suits relating to *Kachharat* and *dar* from civil to revenue courts. The Revenue Minister's

motion for consideration of the Council's amendment was opposed by Dr. *Ram Ugrah Singh* who said that the Government wanted the Council to be a party sanctioning interference with the administration of justice. The hon. Dr. *K. N. Katju*, Minister of Justice, pointed out that the Bill proceeded on the assumption that it was in the interests of zamindars as well as tenants that a very limited question should be decided in revenue courts. Replying, the *Revenue Minister* said that the proposed transfer of suits would save time and money both to zamindars and tenants. The House divided and carried the *Revenue Minister's* motion by 18 to 11 votes.

#### MATERNITY BENEFITS BILL

On the motion of the hon. Dr. *Katju* the House passed the second and third readings of the *Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill*, a proposed amendment being purely verbal.

#### ODDH LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

The House also passed the *Oudh Laws (Amendment) Bill* enabling preemption taking place in respect of a portion of property under the *Oudh Law*. This amendment had been necessitated by the ruling of the *Privy Council* that such pre-emption under the existing law could only take place in respect of the whole property. The House then adjourned till the 24th.

#### TENANCY LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

The discussion of the *U. P. Tenancy Bill* commenced on the 24th. August and continued till the 16th. September when it was passed. Speaking on the third reading motion, Dr. *M. U. Jung*, parliamentary secretary, congratulated the Minister of Revenue on his tact and ability in piloting the Bill and appreciated the magnanimity which the zamindar members had shown to tenants by helping the Government in passing the legislation. It was to their credit that they had faced the grim realities of the situation and had moved with the times. Refuting the suggestion that it was a revolutionary measure, he stressed that the Bill was a sound piece of legislation which happily balanced the interests of zamindars and tenants.

*Lala Mohan Lal Sah*, giving his half-hearted support to the Bill, criticized that instead of adopting a bold land policy the Government had followed the *Agra Tenancy Act* which only perpetuated the zamindari system. He agreed that in order to make the tenants cheerful it was necessary that they must have proprietary interest in land. The Government should purchase the interests in land and settle them on tenants. He thought that the Government had shown no charity in the matter of reduction in revenue while profits of the middleman (landlord) had somewhat been reduced.

Mr. *Chandra Nath* (Congress) said that the passage of the Bill in the Upper House was a triumph of reason. They could not be sufficiently thankful to the Opposition for the reasonable spirit shown by them. The Opposition members ignored their class interests in order to further the interests of the province. He believed that the only solution of the agrarian problem was the abolition of the zamindari system with compensation to zamindars. The *est* area was 5,600,000 acres of which 2,000,000 acres was added after the 1926 legislation and this Bill sought to reduce the *est* area by 700,000 acres. It was therefore wrong to assert that the Bill was vindictive, rapacious or expropriatory piece of legislation. The Bill, he concluded, would not create a new heaven and a new earth for tenants, but the Government had tried to do whatever it could in the circumstances in which it found itself.

*Begam Aisaz Rasool* said that it was in their best interests that the zamindars had reached an understanding with the Government, otherwise whatever the amendments they could make by their strength of votes would have been upset in a joint session of both the Houses. She felt that the part she took in carrying on the negotiations with the Government was quite justified in the circumstances. The *est* provisions in the Bill were particularly unjust to zamindars though the Bill had been improved in some other respects.

Mr. *Ram Sahai* deplored that the Bill did little to improve the condition of scheduled castes, who were mostly landless labourers, and permanently deprived them of any chance of acquiring land.

Mr. *Badri Prasad Kacher* (Congress) said that the *Revenue Minister's* achievement in successfully piloting the Bill by winning over the Opposition was nothing short of a miracle.

*Pai Bahadur Brijendra Surrup* said that it was a matter of gratification that his hopes had been fulfilled and that the Bill which had raised a storm of agitation had smooth passage after its return from the select committee. This would not have been possible without the help and full constructive attitude of a number of zamindars who deserved to be congratulated on their wider outlook.

*Shaukh Masood-uz-Zaman* opined that on the whole the Bill was not an improvement on the existing law. There were several provisions which tended to cause a breach of the peace in the countryside. The ejection clauses were helpful neither to their landlord nor to the tenant.

*Begum Wasir Hosain* said that the Tenancy Bill was a beneficent measure intended to promote the welfare of the down-trodden tenancy.

*Chaudhri Akhtar Husain* said that the passage of the Bill was a great triumph of the Prime Minister who literally broke through the Opposition which was far stronger than the Government party in the House. Proceeding, he said that the Bill was unwanted. It would not lead to agricultural prosperity and the defects outnumbered the advantages. He warned the Government that there might be a crop of cases questioning the validity of the Bill and the Government might have to pay heavy damages for breach of contract. Despite its avowed love for civil liberties the Government had provided in the Bill for criminal penalties to zamindars for civil wrongs. This provision was open to serious objections. It was wrong to have omitted restraint provisions altogether. The treatment accorded to landless labourers by the Government was step-motherly.

*Haji Nisarulla* said that the Government had succeeded in playing off one group and that was why the consideration of 301 clauses took less than a fortnight. The negotiations committee had found the Revenue Minister too stiff and the negotiations came to a sad end. He referred to the growing influence of Kisan sabhais who told the tenants that they need not pay rents and warned the Government that the passage of the Bill would not remedy trouble in the country. The Opposition was reduced to such a position that it had to submit to the Government. The Bill was very short of the expectations of the landlords and it was not worthy of acceptance.

*Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai*, winding up, said that it was a matter of satisfaction that a long-standing controversy was going to end. He hoped that the enactment would restore tranquillity in the countryside. The controversy over the Bill, he added, was causing a great deal of excitement in villages.

The Bill was then passed, one Opposition member saying 'no' to the third reading motion.

#### POWER ALCOHOL BILL

After the Tenancy Bill had been passed, *Dr. K. N. Katju* introduced the Power Alcohol Bill and moved for its consideration. He said that the Government were laying foundations of an important national industry. A huge quantity of molasses was being wasted in the U. P. sugar mills and the Bill sought to utilize that bye-product of the sugar industry for the manufacture of power alcohol on a very large scale. In many western countries the use of mixed fuel was compulsory and it was proposed to mix 20 per cent, power alcohol with 80 per cent petrol. It would be prepared under expert supervision and the entire production and distribution would be under Government control. Aeroplanes for the time being had been excluded from compulsory use of mixed petrol. The Minister added that power alcohol should be used for other purposes and sold in the neighbouring provinces and states. It would make the province independent so far as 20 per cent petrol supply was concerned, provide employment to many and bring some revenue, thereby enabling the Government to reduce the burden of taxation whenever that good prosperous time came. The Minister added that the Bihar Government would also take steps to start the power alcohol industry. Replying to certain points, *Dr. Katju* said that there was no doubt that the provincial legislature was thoroughly competent to enact the Bill and the petrol companies would be extending fullest cooperation to the Government in this connection. The experience of European countries showed that the proposed mixture was not at all injurious to motors.

The Bill was then taken into consideration and passed with two amendments. The amendments to clause 3 empowered the Government to permit the admixture of petrol with not more than 80 per cent power alcohol instead of 25 per cent. Accepting the amendment, the Minister said that the Government intended to proceed very cautiously in the matter. Clause 4 prohibits the use of petrol without

admixture with alcohol for motive power. When *Lala Mohanlal Sah* objected to the clause, the Minister said that instruction would be issued to see that no bonafide travellers from outside using pure petrol would be harassed. The House then adjourned till Oct. 13.

#### THE DEBT REDEMPTION BILL

18th. OCTOBER :—The President, *Sir Sita Ram*, ruled out a point of order raised by a member of the Opposition when consideration of the U. P. Agriculturists' and Workmen's Debt Redemption Bill, as passed by the Assembly, was in progress to-day. It was contended by the Opposition that clause 12 of the Bill extinguished and modified the rights of usufructuary mortgages, as defined by Section 299 (iii) of the Government of India Act and that the previous sanction of the Governor should have been obtained.

The President, in the course of his ruling, observed that the point raised a difficult question but the Chair would not restrict the powers of the House by its ruling. The Chair would be taking a serious responsibility on its shoulders if it were to throw out the Bill, which had been transmitted by the other House on a technical point. Such a ruling from the Chair, besides raising issues of constitutional importance, might have the effect of encroaching on the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, set up under the Government of India Act to decide such intricate points. He allowed the motion for consideration and observed that objections to the Bill could be dealt with at the proper time. The Council was then prorogued.

## The Behar Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Patna—18th. Sept. to 16th. Oct. 1939

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

The Autumn session of the Behar Legislative Assembly commenced at Patna on the 18th. September 1939. Three adjournment motions were sought to be moved but were ruled out of order by the Speaker. One of them sought to discuss the occurrences of August 27, relating to a meeting held in connection with the visit of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. Mr. *Srikrishna Sinha*, Prime Minister, objecting, said that the motion did not seek to discuss any action of the Government and held that the matter was not of sufficient importance to interrupt the normal procedure of the House. The other two motions related to the communal situation in Mahadeva (Champanan District) and the nomination to the District Board there.

#### FAMINE RELIEF FUND AMEND. BILL

The Finance Minister later presented the first supplementary budget for 1939-40. He next introduced the Famine Relief Fund Amendment Bill which was given all the three readings by the House without discussion. The Bill made it clear that interest on investments from the fund need not be calculated precisely on the last day of the preceding year but could be computed and added on to the fund subsequently.

#### PRIMARY EDUCATION AMEND. BILL

The House next passed through all the stages the Bihar and Orissa Primary Education Amendment Bill. This Bill gave power in notified area committees and union boards to levy education cess so that they would be in a position to contribute half the expenses to be incurred on primary education in their respective jurisdictions the other half being borne by Government. The Prime Minister, who introduced the Bill in the absence of Dr. *Syed Mahmud*, Education Minister, said, referring to the demand to include district boards within the purview of the Bill, that members should wait for a new Bill in that connexion and not hold up the present Bill.

#### COURT OF WARDS AMEND. BILL

The Premier next introduced the Court of Wards Amendment Bill. Explaining the provisions of the Bill he said that the three main objects of the measure

were to extend the facilities at present enjoyed by zamindars to tenure-holders, to delete the clause which deemed as "disqualified" any landlords who applied for his estate being taken under the court of wards, thereby removing the sentimental objection of many, and to empower the court on its own motion to take under management the estate of a landlord who was squandering away his property through extravagant habits. The Premier moved that the Bill be referred to a select committee. Mr. *Nasimul Haq* and Mr. *Govindpati Tiwary* wanted that the Bill should be circulated because they felt that it put a dangerous weapon in the hands of Government. Mr. *Rameshwar Prasad Singh*, however, said that zamindars were anxious to avail of the measure. After the Premier's reply the motion for circulation was rejected and the Bill was sent to a select committee.

#### KOSI DIARA RENT REDUCTION BILL

The House next passed without discussion, but with a few verbal amendments, the Kosi Diara Rent Reduction Bill and sent to select committees the Bihar & Chota Nagpur Tenure-holders Relief Bills. The Kosi Diara Bill as modified by the select committee provided for reduction of rent in that area at a flat rate of four and a half annas in the rupee. This special Bill for the Kosi Diara was necessary as according to section 113 of the Tenancy Act, no enhancement of reduction could be made in rents till the expiry of 15 years after their previous settlement and in the case of this area rents were settled in 1926-31.

#### TENURE HOLDERS' RELIEF BILL

The Tenure-holders' Relief Bill sought to confer on Tenure-holders who cultivated their lands themselves the same rights and privileges as had been given to occupancy *ryots* through the Tenancy Act. The House then adjourned.

#### REPLACEMENT OF ALOE PLANTATIONS

19th. SEPTEMBER :—Four non-official resolutions were moved and withdrawn after short discussions to-day. The fifth one was under discussion when the House adjourned. The first resolution was moved by Mr. *Sukhlal Singh*, recommending the replacement of aloe plantations in the Hazaribagh Central Jail with cotton ones since aloe-beating as a form of jail labour was harmful to the health of prisoners. After a statement by Mr. *K. B. Sahay*, Parliamentary Secretary, that experiments in cotton planting were being conducted and Government action in the matter would depend on their results, the resolution was withdrawn.

#### TRANSFERENCE OF LAND TO CHRISTIANS

The second resolution sought an amendment of the land alienation provision of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act with a view to preventing transference of land from non-Christian aborigines to Christian aborigines. There was a long discussion on it, and the debate mainly concerned with the question, whether the restriction could be based on communal considerations. While the mover, Mr. *Prasad* and the supporters of the resolution held that a better educational and economic condition of Christian aborigines was resulting in increasing expropriation of non-Christian aborigines, opponents of the resolution contended that any such prohibitory regulation based on communal lines would be wrong in principle and setting up a bad precedent. Mr. *Sharanghar Sinha*, Parliamentary Secretary, in urging the withdrawal of the resolution, said that it was not possible for Government to say off-hand how far complaints about expropriation of non-Christian aborigines were justified and held that a case had been made out for an examination of the problem. If the examination proved the truth of the complaints the Government could not stand aside and see the non-Christian aborigines ruined. The resolution was withdrawn as also the next two resolutions seeking provision of funds in the next budget for the construction of a bridge over the river Uari and entrusting cane development work to co-operative societies.

A resolution moved by Mr. *Ramcharitra Singh*, suggesting that recruitment be made by open competitive examinations in all services, was under discussion when the House adjourned.

#### MUSLIM WAQFS BILL

21st. SEPTEMBER :—Two Official Bills, the Bihar Muslim Wakfs Bill and the Chotanagpur Tenure-holders' Rent Account Bill, were quickly passed to-day, which next took up the Bihar Muslim Wakfs Bill as reported by the Select Committee. Mr. *Fajwal Hussain* opposed the motion for consideration of the Bill. He said that the Bill constituted an interference with Muslim religious laws

and rights and positively went against Islamic laws with regard to the levy of two and half per cent cess on incomes of Wakfs, payment of interest on advances made by Government to Majlis-e-wakf-Board proposed to be set up by the Bill, and tampering with the will of the beneficiary of a wakf. Mr. *Rafuddin Razi* (Muslim Independent Party), supporting it, said that there was no infringement of religious observances; Muslim wakfs were already paying taxes and other cesses, and technical tampering with the will of the beneficiary were occurring every day in all wakfs. He asked the Muslim League members to remember that in the province of Bengal, under a Premier subscribing to Muslim League view-points, wakfs were controlled and administered by Government machinery.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

**22nd. to 25th. SEPTEMBER :—**The Assembly took up to-day voting on demands for supplementary grants. Six cut motions against the demand under the head "General Administration" launched a daylong discussion of the rent reduction policy of the Government. The debate was not concluded when the House adjourned till the 25th. September when the Government spokesman, in reply to a question, admitted that, in spite of the best efforts of the local excise and police officers in the "dry" district of Saran, smuggling in intoxicating drugs and country liquors from the neighbouring districts of Shahabad, Patna, Champaran, Ballia and Gorakhpur had been going on. It was stated that at the instance of the Local Government the Government of the United Provinces had already taken steps to close all excise shops in Ballia and Gorakhpur districts situated within five miles of the border of Saran district. With regard to the extension of the Prohibition scheme to the three districts of Bihar neighbouring Saran, namely, Shahabad, Patna and Champaran, the Government replied that the matter was under consideration. During the discussion on supplementary demands, the Government spokesman hinted at proposed 'adequate' changes in the provisions regarding rent reduction proceedings under Section 112 (A) of the Bihar Tenancy Act and added that the question of introducing a flat rate reduction was under consideration. A cut motion moved against the demand for the Publicity Department by Mr. *Thakur Ramnandan* (Congress) advocated that the new scheme was wasteful whereas members of the Coalition Party maintained that a Publicity Department like the one contemplated would be an instrument for propaganda by the party in power. The Government supporters differentiated publicity from propaganda and held that the Department would be useful.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

**28th. SEPTEMBER :—**An adjournment motion moved by Mr. *Rafuddin Razi* (Muslim Independent) seeking to discuss the alleged insult offered to a lady member of the House by a Surgeon, a member of the Indian Medical Service, in the premises of the Patna General Hospital was talked out this afternoon. Mr. *A. N. Sinha*, Finance Minister, said that the Government had referred the matter to Mr. Godbole, Commissioner of Patna Division. He added that the Surgeon concerned had tendered a voluntary apology. Mr. Sinha requested the House to leave the matter entirely in his hands and assured them that he would take steps which would satisfy all concerned.

#### RULES OF THE ASSEMBLY

**5th. to 6th. OCTOBER :—**The Assembly devoted the entire day to the consideration of the new Assembly Rules. After considerable discussion, the House adopted an important rule empowering the *Speaker* to suspend any member acting in a disorderly manner from attending the sittings of the Assembly for a period not exceeding the term of the session in which this prerogative might be asserted. Mr. *M. Yunus* contended that the clause was *ultra vires* of Section 71 of the Government of India Act and moved an amendment seeking to limit the Speaker's power of suspension to one day. He also suggested that the matter should be referred to the Federal Court before a final decision was taken by the House. The amendment was lost. The House accepted an amendment deleting the word "sedition" from Rule 27 which debar members from speaking treason, sedition or defamation on the floor of the House. Next day, the 6th. October, the Assembly adopted a rule holding that press reports alone were insufficient to form the basis of questions. The Opposition asserted that such restriction would be a serious encroachment on the rights and privileges of members and asked the Government not to look at the press with distrust. Mr. *Shaf* referred to the procedure obtaining in other legislatures, including



the House of Commons, and maintained that such a rule did not obtain elsewhere. Mr. Yunus said that the rule would require members to go through the difficult and lengthy procedure of ascertaining facts personally about scattered places all over the province. Mr. K. B. Sahay, Parliamentary Secretary, said that interpellations entailed Government expenditure and therefore members must not rush to put questions on the basis of press reports. He suggested to members to verify facts from District Magistrates, whereupon Mr. Shafi replied that members would be reduced to rely on Government machinery entirely in that case. The rule was adopted by 67 votes to 15. An amendment seeking the omission of the rule forbidding admissibility of questions relating to matters falling within the jurisdiction of the Speaker was withdrawn by the mover, on the Government spokesman stating that the entire dignity of the House would suffer if the Speaker's rulings formed the subject-matter of discussion. The House then adjourned till the 13th. October.

#### THE DOWRY RESTRAINT BILL

18th. OCTOBER :—The Assembly passed by 55 votes to 11 to-day the Bihar Dowry Restraint Bill which was a non-official measure penalizing taking of dowry worth more than Rs. 101 in cash or in kind before or during the marriage.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

The deterioration of the labour situation at Jamshedpur was sought to be discussed by an adjournment motion given notice of by Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmed in to-day, but it was ruled out of order by the Speaker on the ground of indefinite wording. The chair also ruled out of order another adjournment motion given notice of by Mr. Yunus seeking to discuss the situation following the taking out of the Mahabiri Jhanda procession at Begaha (north Bihar) on Sept. 28 on the ground of delay in tabling the motion. Giving notice of the motion Mr. Yunus stated that the police was unable to control the procession. The House then took up consideration of non-official Bills.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

14th. OCTOBER :—The Assembly concluded the major part of the official business of the session to-day when it passed three Government Bills and referred two others, the Chota Nagpur Private Forests Bill and the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill to Select Committees. An important measure passed without division was the Muslim Wakfa Bill seeking better administration of Muslim trust estates.

The House agreed to amendments made by the Upper House to the Court of Wards Amendment Bill and adjourned till the 18th.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

16th. OCTOBER :—The hon. Mr. Shri Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, moved to-day the following resolution relating to war :—

"This Assembly regrets that the British Government has made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and has further in complete disregard of Indian opinion passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments. This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through it to the British Government, that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to secure the cooperation of the Indian people that the principles of democracy be applied to India and her policy be guided by her people; and, therefore, this Assembly invites the British Government to make a clear declaration that it has decided to regard India as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution, and further to take suitable action, in so far as it is possible in the immediate present, to give effect to that declaration in regard to the governance of India. This Assembly further recommends that all war measures in this province should be undertaken with the consent of and executed through the Provincial Government."

The resolution, said the Prime Minister, embodied a subject on which considerable discussion had taken place throughout the country. Political observers had noticed war clouds gathering for some time past which had now burst and the world to-day was plunged into war probably greater than that in 1914. These could work either for establishing the principle of democracy on a firm basis or being submerged by the forces of aggression such as Imperialism, Fascism and Nazism which had been the greatest menace to democracy. Forces of democracy however

had been gaining strength gradually and now came the crucial hour when its fate had to be decided finally. Referring to the recent current events in Europe and Far East the Premier sought to illustrate how the forces of aggression were undermining the countries governed by the democratic principles. He referred to Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Manchuria and Poland and said that Imperialism, Fascism and Nazism were responsible for their overthrow and the stronger powers had exploited and swallowed the weaker ones. India always had been with the side of democracy. The question now was how she would take part in the present war and her attitude thereto. She had already declared her foreign policy to be one of friendship with the rest of peoples and powers of the world. India was not out to bargain. If India wanted to join the war it would be as a free nation. She did not want war to be thrust on her. She was only waiting for a gesture from Great Britain. This must be the declaration of independence for India. For some time past the Government had been adopting measures even before the declaration of war which were without consultation with the people and the provincial Governments. The Premier reiterated that British Government should declare India free and take *ad interim* steps to that end without delay. He added that the new world order was needed which would not allow the strong to exploit the weak. The present chaos could not last long. Even the League of Nations served only to hide the ugliness of power politics and to propitiate the strong. Referring to non-violence, he said he was glad to find that even Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill had begun to appreciate the merits of non-violence and till the very last had appealed for a peaceful solution of the international problems.

*Khan Bahadur Saghir-ul-Haque* moved an amendment to the resolution to the effect that the concurrence of the Muslim community and other minorities should be obtained in framing an independent constitution and other matters relating to the governance of India. He said that real independence meant independence of the entire country including minorities, which could be achieved through mutual trust between different communities. As long as the Muslims suffered from suppression by the majority, the idea of independence would never materialize. Mr. *Muhammad Abdul Majid* stated that concrete demands should be made and in the event of their non-fulfilment the country should decide on the future course of action. Mr. *Tajamul Husain* moved an amendment to the effect that if the present Ministry resigned on this issue no other member should accept office in the alternative Government. Mr. *A. H. Hayman*, representing the Anglo-Indian community, agreeing with the spirit of the resolution said that the procedure of bringing forward the resolution before the House was not proper. It would have been better to discuss the attitude of the Assembly before the House framed the resolution so that the Government would have an opportunity of listening to both sides of the case. Despite the noble sentiments expressed in the resolution it was in the nature of a bargain. Mr. Hayman continued that from a practical viewpoint complete independence was not desirable yet on account of dangers of a foreign invasion against which, under the existing conditions, India was not in a position to defend herself. Mr. *M. Yunus* (leader of the Muslim Independent party) opposing the resolution observed that it was self-contradictory. Besides it did not want Indian independence. In one place it admitted Indian dependence on the British Government and in the other place it wanted all power for Indians. The Congress Governments accepted curtailment of their powers when troops were sent out from India.

The Premier, replying to the debate, stated that the House accepted the principle of the resolution. The resolution did not reflect a bargaining spirit but a friendly gesture and not a threat.

The amendment to the resolution moved by Mr. *Tajamul Husain* to the effect that if the present Ministry resigned over this issue no other member should accept office, was withdrawn while another amendment moved by *Khan Bahadur Saghir-ul-Haque* for obtaining concurrence of the Muslim community and other minorities in framing an independent constitution was lost by 10 to 73 votes.

The resolution after a day-long debate was passed by 74 votes to 6 with the following alteration in the last sentence made by the Premier, "This Assembly further recommends that arrangements should be made whereby all war measures in this province should be undertaken with the consent of and executed through the provincial Government." The House then adjourned *sine die*.

# The Behar Legislative Council

**Autumn Session—Patna—25th. Sept. to 14th. October 1939**

The Autumn session of the Bihar Legislative Council commenced at Patna on the 25th. September 1939. Eight non-official Bills were introduced.

The Government having raised the objection that the Upper House was not competent to initiate taxation proposals, the Agricultural Income-tax (Second Amendment) Bill was withdrawn by its sponsor.

An adjournment motion was sought to be moved by Mr. *Mobarak Ali* to discuss the inadequate measures taken for the protection of the inhabitants of the province "who are exposed to grave danger consequent upon the declaration of war by His Majesty's Government against Germany."

14th. OCTOBER :—The Council was prorogued *sine die* to-day after passing three official Bills, namely, the Relief Fund Amendment Bill, the Places of Pilgrimage Amendment Bill and the Court Fees Amendment Bill.

# The Assam Legislature

**Joint Session—Shillong—4th. August 1939**

## AGRICULTURAL INCOME-TAX BILL

A joint session of both the House of the Assam Legislature summoned to discuss and vote on the Agricultural Income-tax Bill, which was passed by the Assembly but rejected by the Council, commenced at Shillong on the 4th. August 1939. Rai Bahadur *Heramba Prasad Borooah*, president of the Council, presiding. The uniqueness of the event and the grave issues involved aroused intense public interest in the session. The galleries were overcrowded with visitors and hundreds were refused admission for lack of space. The attendance of members of both the Houses was large, the only absentees being Mr. *Basanta Kumar Das*, Speaker of the Assembly, Mrs. *Zubeida Ataur Rahaman*, Deputy President of the Council and two members of the Assembly.

Before commencing business the President made a feeling reference to the death of Mr. *Tarunram Phookan*, a Congress leader. The Premier, Mr. *Bardoloi*, leader of the House, Sir *Muhammad Saadulla*, leader of the Opposition, and several others joined in paying tribute to the memory of Mr. Phookan.

Mr. *Rohini Kumar Chaudhury*, ex-Minister, raising a point of order questioned the competence of a joint session to consider a bill which was rejected by the Council. An interesting debate followed and the President ruled the point out of order saying that the competence of a session summoned by the Governor in the exercise of his discretion, according to the provision of sub-sec. 74, Government of India Act, was beyond question. The Finance Minister introduced the Bill for consideration. Mr. *Moore* (European), opposing the Bill, reiterated that the European group accepted the principle of the bill but opposed it in the present form, because it did not provide reliefs or safeguards for those paying double taxation. The Bill was ultimately passed by 65 to 56 votes after which the House prorogued.

**Council Session—Shillong—10th August 1939**

## THE FINANCE BILL

An one-day session of the Assam Legislative Council commenced at Shillong on the 10th. August 1939 when the Assam Finance Bill which was passed by the Legislative Assembly in April was passed without division. The Bill fixed the rates at

which income under the Agricultural Income-tax Act and sales of articles of luxury under the Sales Tax Act would be taxed.

The Finance Minister (Mr. *Fakhruddin Ahmed*) announced a general remission to the extent of 50 per cent of the total annual tax to individuals, firms and companies on their making representations.

On this, several amendments, which had been moved, were withdrawn. Only one amendment, moved by Khan Bahadur *Maulvi Gousuddin Ahmed Choudhury*, to scale down the rate of taxation in the case of every individual, firm and other associations of persons (other than companies) was put to the vote and lost.

Mr. *H. Emblem* (European Group) had moved an amendment to substitute rate of one anna and six pies in the rupee for the two annas and six pies in the case of companies on the total income but withdrew it on the Finance Minister's announcement of a 50 per cent remission.

Clause 2 of the Bill states that the rates of Agricultural income-tax for the year which began on April 1 of this year shall, for the purpose of sections 3 and 5 of the Assam Agricultural Income-Tax Act, 1939, be as follows:—

(A) In the case of every Hindu undivided or joint family (1) at the rate applicable, under the list of rates contained in (B), to a sum equal to the share of a brother, if such share exceeds Rs. 5,000 and (2) at four pies in the rupee if the share of a brother is Rs. 5,000 or less.

(B) In the case of every individual, firm or other association of persons (other than companies) (1) on the first Rs. 1,500 of the total income, the rate is *nil*, (2) on the next Rs. 3,500 of the total income the rate is nine pies in the rupee, (3) on the next Rs. 5,000 the rate is one anna and three pies in the rupee, (4) on the next Rs. 5,000 the rate is two annas in the rupee and (5) on the balance of the total income, the rate is two annas and six pies in the rupee.

(C) In the case of every company on the whole of the total income the rate is two annas and six pies in the rupee.

It is provided, however, that (1) no agricultural income-tax shall be payable on a total agricultural income which does not exceed Rs. 3,000 and (2) the agricultural income tax payable shall in no case exceed half the amount by which the total agricultural income exceeds Rs. 3,000.

Regarding the rates of the sales tax, Clause 3 states, "the tax levied under section 3 (1) of the Assam Sales Tax Act, 1939, shall be a tax of 5 per cent on the retail sale of each of the following articles: motor cars, motor cycles and radio or wireless sets."

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill points out that "the object of this Bill is to impose for the year 1939-40 the rates of taxation under sections 3 and 5 of the Agricultural Income-Tax Act, 1939, and under section 3 (1) of the Assam Sales Tax Act, 1939, for balancing the Budget and producing extra funds for the development of the nation-building activities of the Government."

## The C. P. Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Nagpur—2nd. to 18th. August 1939

### LAND REVENUE AMENDMENT BILL

The autumn session of the Central Provinces Legislative Assembly commenced at Nagpur on the 2nd. August 1939. The attendance was thin. Official business was transacted during the sitting, which lasted two hours. Seven bills were passed into law.

During discussion on the Bill amending the C. P. Land Revenue Act, 1917, which gives power to the Government to order direct payment of land revenue due from "malik makbuza" lands instead of through the "malguzars," the spokesmen of the "malguzars" contended that it amounted to a breach of contract between the Government and the "malguzars" regarding the collection of land taxes. The Revenue Minister, Mr. *S. V. Gokhale*, replying, pointed out that the Bill was equitable in nature. He repudiated the charge of breach of contract and said that

the "malguzars" were merely agents of the Government in collecting rents from tenants. The Government now wanted to do away with this practice and set up its own machinery for collection of rents from tenants. The Bill was passed into law.

#### PRIMARY EDUCATION AMEND. BILL

An important Bill, which was also passed to-day, sought to amend the C. P. Primary Education Act, 1920. Under the provisions of this measure, the Provincial Government can formulate and bring into operation schemes for the spread of primary education of boys and girls of communities in particular areas, the expenses to be borne by the local bodies concerned. During discussion on this Bill, Mr. *Iftikhar Ali* (Muslim League) pleaded for exclusion of girls who could not attend schools on religious grounds. The Education Minister explained that the object of the Bill was the speedy removal of illiteracy from villages. He, therefore, failed to appreciate the view-point of those who asked for exemption for girls. The nation to-day needed, said the Minister, educated mothers and, therefore, the education of girls was essential.

#### OTHER OFFICIAL BILLS

On the motion of the Minister, Mr. D. P. Mishra the House passed into law an important Bill which enabled the Government to introduce adult franchise for all municipalities in the province.

On the Premier, Pandit R. S. Shukla's motion the Assembly passed the Bill amending the C. P. Game Act. Tenants will now be permitted to shoot wild animals, thus enabling them to protect their crops.

#### TENANCY AMENDMENT BILL

8th. AUGUST :—The Assembly rejected to-day Rao Saheb D. D. Rajurkar's motion for circulation of the Tenancy Amendment Bill. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Revenue Minister, refuting the Opposition charge, said that the Government was not rushing the measure through and were referring it to a select committee. He added that it was to improve the land and remove the slavery of the tenant that the measure had been undertaken. The Government did not wish to deprive "malguzars" of their rights. The House, thereafter, took up the Revenue Minister's motion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, and adjourned.

#### MONEY-LENDERS' AMENDMENT BILL

5th. AUGUST :—The Assembly transacted non-official business to-day by passing into law Mr. Rajendra Singha's Moneylenders' Amendment Bill with an amendment that the Act shall not apply to proprietors, who have advanced grain or money exclusively to any of his tenants for seed, land improvement or agricultural operations.

#### MINIMUM WAGES BILL

The Opposition suffered a defeat by 24 votes to 64 when it pressed for division Mr. G. S. Page's motion for reference to a select committee the Minimum Wages Bill. The Bill proposed that every male labourer shall be paid at least 10 annas per day and every female labourer 6 annas and restricting the hours of work to eight. The hon. Mr. Bharuka, opposing the Bill, said that the Government was very sympathetic towards the labourers but the fixing of a minimum wage for all parts of the province would tell on their industries as they had to face a keen competition and the whole agricultural structure would collapse. Further, if the Bill was passed, the Government would be required to spend 40 lakhs of rupees more on industrial labour for their work.

#### MINIMUM WAGE FIXING MACHINERY BILL

Mr. V. R. Kalappa (Congress) next moved that the Minimum Wage Fixing Machinery Bill be referred to a select committee. Mr. L. H. Bartlett raised a point of order that the Bill came within the purview of the federal legislation list as it referred to labour in mines, hence it was ultra vires of this legislature, which the Speaker, Mr. G. S. Gupta ruled out. Rao Saheb Rajurkar, leader of the Opposition, supporting the Bill suggested that the local bodies and the P. W. D. should be exempted from the operation of the Bill.

#### MUNICIPAL ROADS—ADJ. MOTION

7th. AUGUST :—The dissolution of the Kamptee Municipality formed the subject matter of an adjournment motion in the Assembly this morning. Mr. *Iftikhar Ali* (Muslim League) sought the adjournment of the House to discuss

"the undemocratic policy of the Government" pursued in regard to municipal committees of the province, particularly in dissolving the Municipal Committee at Kamptee. The hon. Mr. D. P. Mishra, Minister for Local Self-Government, opposed the admission of the motion, on the ground that it was vague and did not refer to any particular municipality and cited Kamptee merely by way of illustration. The hon. Mr. G. B. Gupta, Speaker of the Assembly, admitted the motion. But the mover obtained the support of only 21 members. The minimum being 23, the motion fell through. The House thereafter continued discussion of non-official Bills.

#### AGRARIAN DISTRESS

8th. AUGUST :—In the course of the discussion on non-official resolutions to-day, a reference was made to the distress prevailing in the province. The general deficiency in rainfall in the province had caused considerable uneasiness in rural areas. In several places, field labourers had left the villages in search of other work. Reports of scarcity of fodder had also been received. From certain parts of the province requests had been received by the Government to organise relief. Conditions were reported to be worse in the Berar and the Nagpur divisions than in other parts. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Minister for Revenue, replying to the debate on the resolution, referred to above, said that the premises on which it was based were wrong. The outturn of crops, taken as a whole during the current year, was not very much less than that of last year. This year, however, happened to be unfortunately one of those in which estimates turned out to be wrong; but the conditions of the year were very peculiar, and to make an accurate forecast was difficult. The Minister stated that the Government had already remitted a sum of Rs. four lakhs, and suspended the collection of nearly 24 lakhs this year. Orders had been issued to the district officers to tour extensively to study the conditions. The Government, he said, were aware of the pitiable condition of the Kisans and were trying to open relief works according to the needs. The total land revenue was Rs. 2.59 crores. If their request was accepted, the Government would lose nearly 1.29 crores which would completely break the back of the Government. Mr. Khandekar suggested that a death duty should be imposed on the rich to make good the loss which would be incurred by carrying out the resolution. The resolution was by 51 to 21 votes.

#### THE TENANCY AMENDMENT BILL

4th. AUGUST :—The Assembly referred to-day to select committees the Tenancy Amendment Bill and the Municipalities Amendment Bill. The latter Bill abolishes the system of nomination. It, however, provides that where not even one Muslim, one Harijan and one woman are elected to the Municipal Committee a representative of each of the three classes be selected by the elected members. In case the latter fail to select them, the Provincial Government will have power to nominate them.

#### HARIJAN TEMPLE WORSHIP BILL

16th. AUGUST :—Two important legislative measures, namely, the Harijan Temple Worship (Removal of Disabilities) Bill and the Vidyamandir Bill were referred to select committees to-day. The former had been framed on the lines of the Bombay and Madras Temple Entry Bills. While the Harijan members of the Opposition opposed it, as they thought it fell short of their demands, those on the Congress benches supported the measure. Premier R. S. Shukla, replying to the debate, said that a province like Madras, which was known for its orthodoxy had opened temples and asked if they would not be thrown open in this province. He informed the House that out of 41 official opinions 39 were in favour and amongst the non-officials a vast majority supported the proposed bill. The Premier assured the Harijan members that the Government would do everything possible to ameliorate their condition and wished that those who had opposed the Bill would also join hands with the Government.

#### THE VIDYAMANDIR BILL

The Vidyamandir Bill, which had been the subject of severe criticism at the hands of the Muslims, brought forth to-day an attack on the syllabus, but the Speaker holding that they could not go into the merits of the Bill and the Premier's statement that the question of syllabus was still under consideration, cut short the attack.

## COLLECTION OF STATISTICS BILL

The House next passed into law the Collection of Statistics Bill, Grants-in-Aid to Local Bodies Bill, and Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories (Amendment) Bill. The last Bill aimed at regulating rates by appointing rate-fixing committees which will prescribe maximum rates for ginning and pressing. As this novel measure involves certain amount of interference with the industry, the Government are restricting its operation for five years at the end of which the position would be reviewed. The Village Sanitation and Public Management (Amendment) Bill was circulated while the hon. Mr. S. D. Gokhale did not proceed with the Berar Land Revenue Code (Amendment) Bill in view of the prevailing distress there.

18th. AUGUST :—The Municipalities and Local Self-Government Amendment Bills were passed into law without a division. By these measures, nominations to local bodies will be abolished. The House then adjourned *sine die*.

## Winter Session—Nagpur—1st. Nov. to 8th. November 1939

## THE VIDYAMANDIR BILL (CONTD.)

The attempts of the Opposition to hold up legislation were foiled to-day when the House commenced its winter session at Nagpur on the 1st. November 1939. Mr. Khaparde (University Independent) said that he learnt from the press that the Ministry proposed to resign on November 4. If that was so, he appealed to the Government not to rush through any legislation controversial in character and which may not be to the liking of their successors. Mr. Rajurkar, Leader of the Opposition, also joined in the appeal. Mr. Rauf Shah, Leader of the League Party, asked the Ministry to follow the Bombay Ministry's example in this matter. The Premier, Pandit R. S. Shukla, after some discussion, announced that he was unmoved by the appeal.

The hon. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Education Minister, then moved consideration of the Vidya Mandir Bill as reported by the Select Committee. Mr. T. J. Kedar raised a point of order as to the legality of moving the Bill, which, he contended, was a financial measure and could not be moved without the consent and recommendation of the Governor. The point of order was ruled out by the *Speaker*.

2nd. NOVEMBER—The Assembly passed into law to-day the Vidya Mandir Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, by 62 votes to 19, after which it took up consideration of the Tenancy Bill. Opposition to the Bill was based mainly on the ground that it created denominational institutions, namely Vidya Mandirs and Madinatulims, which would foster a religious bias and retard the national unity. Mr. Abdur Rahman Khan (Muslim League) appealed to the Governor to use his power to protect the rights of minorities and not to give his assent to the Bill. The hon. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Minister of Education, reminded the House that the Government had not departed from the agreement reached with the Muslims on the subject. He appealed to the Muslims and other oppositionists to extend their full co-operation in the cause of the spread of literacy throughout the province. The Bill, he added, facilitate the establishment of Vidya Mandirs and Madinatulims in villages for the spread of literacy by establishing one school in every village managed by a village committee. Up-to-date, 100 Vidya Mandirs had been established on the initiative of the Government. The scheme was not intended to supplant the normal educational activity of the Government or local bodies, but the Bill intended to give corporate existence to those managing Vidya Mandirs and make them accountable in law. The Minister pointed out that the Bill did not debar a Muslim joining a Vidya Mandir or a Hindu joining a Madinatulim. The naming of the institution would depend on the wishes of the donor.

## THE TENANCY BILL

On the ground that the Government had said that if the Tenancy Bill was not passed, all labour would be lost, the *Speaker*, Mr. G. D. Gupta, suspended the Standing Order requiring the lapse of ten days between the publication of the Select Committee report on the Bill and the taking up of its consideration. The hon. Mr. Mehta, Law Minister, on behalf of the Government, argued that nothing would be gained by prolonging the agony of the tenants and others whose interests were affected by the measure. Mr. R. S. Rajurkar, Leader of the Opposition, moved for circulation of the Bill.

3rd. NOVEMBER :—The Assembly divided five times to-day in the course of the discussion on the Bill, the proportion of voting on the whole being four to one in favour of the Government. "You are practising a camouflage on Malguzars by restraining their rights bit by bit. If you are not giving sufficient compensation now, what guarantee is there that you will accede to their just demand in case of absolute abolition in future?" asked Mr. G. M. Chitnavis, opposing the Revenue Member's motion that the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill be taken into consideration at once. Khan Bahadur *Hidayat Husain* warned the Government that a measure passed in such haste would lead to class war. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Minister for Revenue, said that, class war was not caused by a measure of this kind. On the contrary, it would obviate class war and lead to general contentment. Refuting the charge of haste, the Minister said the measure was such as could not be postponed.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

4th. NOVEMBER :—For the first time in its history, the Assembly held a morning sitting to-day to facilitate the disposal of business. The whole of the morning was devoted to the discussion of the amendments to the Premier's resolution, most of which were negative. In the afternoon, it was expected that the C. P. Tenancy Amendment Bill would be passed, but the Government decided to postpone its consideration to a future date.

Of the eleven amendments to the Premier's war resolution, only two, namely, those moved by Mr. *Rauf Shah*, Muslim League leader, and by Mr. *Thakur Chedial*, Chief Whip of the Congress Party, were held to be in order. Mr. *Rauf Shah's* amendment underwent certain drafting changes. Mr. *Chedial's* amendment was held to be in order despite the objection of Mr. T. J. Kedar that there was no need to express confidence in the Ministry while calling upon them to resign. The debate on the amendment evoked the remark from Mr. B. G. Khaparde that "the Congress ministries did not come into office nor are they going out of office. They were put into office and are being taken away from office." (Laughter).

Speaking on the war resolution, the Premier, *Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla* traced the developments leading up to the entry of India in the war and said that of all the members of the British Commonwealth, it was India and India alone which had been dragged into the war without a single Indian having been so much as consulted on the matter. "Nothing in recent times has brought home to us, as this act of the British Government, the inferiority of the status that India occupies in the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations" he declared. Critically analysing the statements made by H. E. the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, the Premier said that they would be failing in their duty if they did not take note of these pronouncements and did not voice the disappointment and resentment which they had created in the minds of the people of these provinces whom they represented in this House. The Premier said that India's case was unanswerable and could not be resisted by England without exposing herself to the ridicule of the world, but unfortunately both for England and for India an attempt was being made to ridicule the demand itself with the result that this country was faced with a conflict which perhaps might prove to be unprecedented in history. Referring to Sir Samuel Hoare's remarks in the House of Commons that he did not desire the waste of all those efforts which he and other British statesmen had made to bring to an end the grim chapters of non-co-operation and to make it easier for Indians and the British to work together, the Premier said that he had hoped that "those grim chapters" had actually ended and that India would get her birthright without any further struggle and suffering. It was in that hope that they had accepted office in 1937 and it was in that hope that they had worked night and day not only to ameliorate the lot of the suffering people but also to dissipate the doubts, if they really existed, of the British people that Indians could successfully shoulder responsibility for managing their finances and maintaining law and order in their own country.

"The fact that we have proved our fitness for self-government has not brought us nearer our goal. Now another bogey has been trotted out before us—the bogey of minorities," added *Pandit Shukla*. "By now, who is so ignorant as not to know that it is Nazi technique first to foster communal bitterness among a free people and then make it a reason for depriving them of their freedom? The only difference is that while the Nazis use communal differences for conquering a free nation, British statesmen are using it to perpetuate their



conquest of the Indian people." The Premier said that the communal problem not being peculiar to India, could be solved here as it had been solved elsewhere. There must be a reasonable solution which could be found, provided the third party left the field or came forward as a peacemaking factor. "But unfortunately for us, the third party is not a disinterested entity, but one which consciously or unconsciously takes advantages of these communal bickerings." To lay emphasis on the communal question at this juncture was short-sighted policy and was as dangerous as playing with fire. "I could have understood Germany trying on her own account to stir up communal trouble with a view to creating a state of anarchy in this country," declared the Premier. "What is surprising is that it is British statesmen themselves who are playing the enemy's game." The Premier warned that "the enemies of England, be they open or covert, will have ample material in India to work upon. Many amongst the communalists, be they Hindus or Muslims, have a fascination for Fascist theories. Moreover, thanks to the unthinking attitude of England, a large number of people, sincere in their own way and drawn from all communities, look upon Russia and her Communist theory as a panacea for all ills of this unhappy country. If the British Government, the Princes and various communities cannot solve the Indian problem, more and more people in desperation will look for a solution from quarters which we have learnt to hate but which the younger generation is learning to look up with expectancy."

Continuing, the Premier said: "Sir Samuel Hoare has been pleased to divide India into Congress India and non-Congress India. He will very soon discover that the only stabilising factor in present-day India is the Congress and any weakening of its influence will open the floodgates of Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism. It would be a thousand pities if the British Government in its anxiety to stay in India yet awhile and if the communally-minded men in their zeal for a few crumbs so far forget themselves as to destroy the Indian National Congress, which, in my opinion, is a second Himalayas which protects India from the inroads of foreign Nazi and Bolshevik hordes." Concluding the Premier said, "I would only ask Sir Samuel Hoare to remember that the prospect of repression he holds out for us may or may not break the spirit of this nation, but it will certainly provide German propagandists with stories of atrocities. Repression, if and when practised, will shock the conscience of the world much more than German atrocities as it would be practised upon an unarmed population and upon non-violent resisters. Yes, it seems that another and a more grim period in the history of British rule in India is in sight and the nation will need all the spiritual courage that it can muster to meet the threat given by Sir Samuel Hoare on behalf of the British Government. I have no doubt that if the threat does materialise and we are forced to resist it we shall be embarking upon the task with easy conscience. Our objective being nothing else than our own freedom and that of other suppressed nations, our weapon being nothing but complete non-violence, we can go forward on our path with the conviction that truth and justice are on our side, and though truth and justice might suffer a temporary setback, still they are bound to triumph in the end."

Mr. *Rauf Shah*, moving the Muslim League amendment, regretted that the Premier had called the minority problem a bogey. The Government had failed to create confidence in the minds of minorities and Muslims were generally afraid that they were not properly protected. He added that during the two and a half years the Congress had held office, they should have solved the minority question.

While Mr. *Rauf Shah* referred to the judicious settlement of the communal question in Egypt, Mr. *Pande* (Congress) asked whether he was prepared to give the same concession to non-Muslims in provinces like the Punjab as Zagul Pasha had given in Egypt, to which Mr. *Rauf Shah* replied that he did not belong to that province (laughter).

The discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned till the 6th. November when Mr. *Abdur Rauf Shah*, Leader of the Muslim League party in the Assembly, continuing his unfinished speech, criticised the present day leadership of the Congress and contended that their vision and outlook were narrow. If Mr. C. R. Das, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and such others had been in the Congress, Muslims would not have left it.

Mrs. *Kale* : Are you ready to follow Mr. Subhas Bose ?

Mr. *Rauf Shah* : You give the leadership of the Congress to him and you will see. Continuing, Mr. *Rauf Shah* said that he preferred the Hindu Mahasabha to the Congress, because it was more honest in its attitude towards Muslims,

while the Congress indulged in camouflage. He concluded by saying that the Congress was denying to Muslims that freedom of opinion and democracy which it was demanding of Britain.

*Rao Sahib Rajurkar*, Leader of the Opposition, moving his amendment, expressed dissatisfaction with the statements made by Lord Zetland and Sir Samuel Hoare, which, he said, were not calculated to inspire a feeling of co-operation in the minds of Indians, though their sympathies were undoubtedly with the Allies in the war.

*Mr. T. J. Kedar* (University Vice-Chancellor) said that in regard to the form and content of Dominion Status, according to constitutional law, it was as was pointed out by Lord Samuel in the Commons debate, the majority community who had a right to be consulted and the minority had no locus standi. It was only after that form had been settled that the minorities could claim protection, not from an alien authority but from the majority and to insist that that protection should be adequate and satisfactory. He thought it was a mistake for Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to have accepted the invitation to meet Mr. Jinnah. The bane of India was that the minority communities could approach the British Government and make common cause against the majority. Concluding, Mr. Kedar said that if Indian Muslims did not consider themselves Indians first, they had no right to be heard and he reminded them that the aggressor on India, whoever he was, whether a Muslim or any other, would be met with resistance. Mr. Kedar asserted that so long as unity was made a condition precedent to the grant of Dominion Status, that unity would never be achieved.

*Mr. B. G. Khaparde* (University representative) said there was no limit to asking but there was a limit to giving. The minority in India wanted to rule the majority, because it was a minority. Mr. Khaparde moved an amendment that the Ministry should, instead of resigning, stick to office and take steps to impart military training to make the people fit for self-defence. He said that he was himself once a non-co-operator but he had soon realised the futility of non-co-operation. If there was no chance of their wishes being fulfilled by remaining in office, they might still remain in office and do something which would make the fulfilment of those wishes a possibility. He pointed out that by absenting themselves from the Central Assembly, Congressmen had helped the passage of the Defence of India Act and wondered why they were now complaining that the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments had been curtailed.

*Dr. N. B. Khare*, ex-Congress Premier, moving his amendment asking members of the majority party to resign attacked the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. He blamed Gandhiji for making the Congress weak.

*Thakur Cheditai* moved his amendment expressing full confidence of the House in the Ministry and asking the Ministry to resign.

*Mr. H. J. Khandekar* (Harijan), the Vice-President of the Provincial Forward Bloc, felt that had the Congress High Command followed Mr. Bose's suggestion about giving six months' ultimatum to England, the Viceroy's statement of October 18 would have been different. The debate had not concluded when the House adjourned.

**7th. NOVEMBER :—***Mr. L. H. Bartlett*, representing the European Group, remarked to-day that modern methods of warfare had brought India very much closer to Europe than even before and she could not keep aloof. Under the modern democratic form of Government, he said, it was not always possible to consult representatives of popular opinion before taking measures. Statesmen had to be guided by previous expressions of public feeling. Previously India had united by expressed disapproval of Nazism and as such it was not difficult to understand the measures adopted by the Government. If these measures were not taken, the Government would have laid itself open to the charge of neglecting its duty of protecting the country. Referring to the Ordinances, Mr. Bartlett observed that in times of great stress and emergency such things were inevitable and the restrictions imposed in India were not so severe as those imposed in England. Regarding restriction of the power of all Provincial Governments of which the Congress had complained, he failed to understand their attitude. If they were in the position of the Government of India, they would have acted in exactly the same way.

*Rev. Rogers* (Anglo-Indian) suggested the formation of a National Government in this hour of crisis.

Mr. *Gavai* said that the demand for a declaration of war aims in their application to India was good but untimely. By helping England, India would be helping herself.

*Rev. Rogers* observed that merely because England had not conceded India's demand, it was wrong for the Congress to go into the wilderness.

Mr. *M. M. Haq* (Muslim League) believed that democracy had failed under the present constitution. He alleged that liberty of religion and liberty of the Press had not been maintained by the Government and cited the case of the *Hitavada* from whom, he said, facilities had been withdrawn.

Mrs. *S. Chauhan* could not understand how while Britain was fighting for democracy, she could withhold independence from India and why India had been declared a belligerent country without her consent. She reiterated the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly.

Mr. *Abdul Rahman Khan* (League) said if anyone had any complaint against British Imperialism it was the Muslims as history would show. He thought Muslims could protect themselves. It was the Hindus who wanted British protection. The Muslims had acquired a separatist mentality because of the treatment they had received at the hands of the Congress.

Messrs. *Jakatdar*, *V. R. Kalappa*, *A. Saigal*, and *Agnibhoj* and Mrs. *Durgabal Joshi* (Congress members) supported the Premier's resolution while Messrs. *Gulam Ahmed Hussain* (Muslim League) and *Khobergade* (*Harijan Ambedkarite*) opposed it. The discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned.

**8th. NOVEMBER :—**After four day's debate, the Assembly passed this evening the Premier's war crisis resolution as amended without a division. The amendments accepted were those moved by *Thakur Cheditai* (Congress) expressing the fullest confidence in the Ministry and calling upon the Ministers to resign and Mr. *Khandekar's* (Scheduled Caste) amendment regarding safeguards to minorities. The Muslim League amendment was lost by 69 votes against 7. Other amendments were either lost or withdrawn.

Mr. *K. P. Pande*, Mr. *M. Y. Shareef* and Dr. *Mohodaya* spoke in favour of the Premier's resolution, which was opposed by Mr. *Iftikar Ali*, and *Khan Bahadur Mirza Rahman Beg*.

The hon'ble Pandit *D. P. Mishra* said that they did not want Swaraj at once but an assurance of independence after the war, if unity between Hindus and Muslims was brought about. He declared that the Muslim League was not representative of Muslim opinion in the provinces. He appealed to the House to sink their differences.

Premier *Shukla* said that they had done their best and asked the House to support his resolution. After the resolution had been passed, Mr. *G. S. Gupta*, the Speaker adjourned the House *sine die*.

## The Orissa Legislative Assembly

Monsoon Session—Cuttack—4th. Sept. to 15th. Sept. '39

### SAMBALPUR LOCAL SELF-GOV'T. BILL

The Monsoon session of the Orissa Legislative Assembly commenced at Cuttack on the 4th. September 1939. Mr. *Biswanath Das*, the Premier and Leader of the House, referred to the deaths of Mr. *G. C. Thatraj Bahadur*, a member of the Orissa Assembly, and Mr. *T. R. Phookan* of Assam, who was a member of the O'Donnell Committee. Separate condolence resolutions were passed, all standing. The Speaker associated himself with the sentiments expressed by the House and promised to convey the resolutions to the families of the deceased.

Mr. *Bodhrum Dubey* introduced the Sambalpur Local Self-Government Bill to make better provision to provide for the creation of representative institutions in rural areas in the Sambalpur District. He said that the Bill had been introduced pending the introduction of a consolidated bill for the Provinces for replacing the present obsolete system of District Councils by District Boards on the lines of the

District Boards of North Orissa. Mr. *Patnaik*, opposing, wanted the Government to wait till a consolidated bill had been introduced.

Discussion had not finished when the House adjourned till the next day, the 5th. September when Mr. *Brojo Sundar Das*'s amendment for circulating the Bill for eliciting public opinion was rejected by 22 to 10 votes. Similarly, the House rejected Mr. *M. G. Patnaik*'s amendment for referring the Bill to a Select Committee by 24 to 11 votes. As the House was going to proceed to consider the Bill, clause by clause, the Hon. Mr. *Bawa Nath Das*, Premier, stated that this was the first legislative measure that Sambalpur was going to have. In view of that he appealed to the Opposition not to move any amendment to the clauses but to come to a compromise regarding the same by private consultations. Mr. *Brojo Sundar Das* welcomed this gesture of compromise and agreed to the proposal of the Premier.

#### ORISSA DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

The Government next presented a number of supplementary demands for development schemes. A sum of Rs. 16,400 was demanded for a scheme of repairs to irrigation tanks in Angul subdivision.

It had been decided by the Government that Khaddar should be substituted for mill yarn and that all prison clothing should be in khadi. The total quantity approximately required for 1939-40 was 26,000 yards out of which looms in the jails of the province manufactured 10,550 yards, and the purchase of remaining cloth was estimated to cost Rs. 7,725. Thus the total cost of 26,000 yards partly manufactured in the jails and partly purchased from the A. I. S. A. would be about Rs. 12,618, as compared with Rs. 4,313-4. Demand had therefore been made for Rs. 8,500 towards the cost of khaddar purchased outside the province.

A demand was also made for the provision of 50 extra students in the physics and chemistry classes of the Intermediate classes of the Ravenshaw College due to increased admissions.

A demand for Rs. 35,730 was also made for the construction of buildings at Bari for the Basic Education scheme.

A sum of Rs. 600 was demanded for grant to All-Orissa Deaf and Dumb School started by Mr. B. B. Chowdary, which is the only institution of its kind in Orissa.

Another demand of Rs. 16,000 was made for the mass literacy scheme.

To put into operation the recommendation of the Salt Industry Inquiry Committee, the Government have made a demand for Rs. 1,300.

For the anti-malarial operations at Koraput by way of extensive improvements to the various drains and nullahs a demand for Rs. 15,000 out of a total of Rs. 30,700 for the scheme was made.

Demands were also made for the construction of inspection bungalows at Rayagada and Nawapara. The House then adjourned till the 8th.

#### SAMBALPUR LOCAL SELF-GOVT. BILL (CONTD.)

8th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly passed to-day the Sambalpur Local Self-Government Bill with slight modifications in the clause regarding the removal of members. As a result of mutual consultation between the Treasury Bench and the Opposition there were very few amendments of a minor nature. The speaker put 234 clauses of the Bill to vote one by one and all were passed. The Bill as amended was then passed. According to existing constitution there is no direct system of election to the District Council of Sambalpur. Tenants have thus got no voice at all in the elections and so the existing system has grown obsolete and is not in keeping with the progress made by Sambalpur district in several other spheres of activities. The present Bill as passed by the Assembly extends the provision of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act to Sambalpur with such modifications as are suited to the present conditions of Sambalpur. So this Bill brings the existing local bodies into line with similar institutions in other districts of north Orissa. During the discussion of the Bill the Hon. *Bodhram Dube*, Minister pointed out that another unified consolidated Bill for the whole of Orissa would soon be brought forward. Meanwhile this Bill had been introduced to give Sambalpur those amenities of civic life which had so long been denied to her.

#### PROHIBITION BILL

The House next took up consideration of the Prohibition Bill moved by the hon. Mr. *Bodhram Dube*. Mr. Dube said that the Government proposed to

introduce early total prohibition in the district of Balasore, where opium prohibition had already been enforced. Complete Prohibition would gradually extend to the whole province. He said that total Prohibition meant a loss of Rs. 3,300,000 in addition to the cost of the additional Prohibition staff. The Government were thinking of taxation to replenish this loss, but even if that loss could not be replenished, they were determined to introduce Prohibition. The Minister continued: "Prohibition in the entire province of Orissa will entail a loss of about 40 lakhs of rupees in the revenue of the province. The present income from Excise is about 33 lakhs of rupees. There will be a loss of this whole amount after this Bill comes into operation. Over and above that there will be an additional expenditure of about 7 lakhs of rupees for maintaining an extra staff in addition to the staff now working in the Excise Department and other expenses for putting the Act into operation and working out its details." Total prohibition being the ultimate policy of the Government, the present Bill proposes to prohibit absolutely the import, export, transport, manufacture, possession, and sale of liquor and intoxicating drugs except under certain special circumstances. The hon. Mr. Dube pointed out that the Government at present intended to introduce total prohibition in the district of Balasore, where opium prohibition had already been enforced. Gradually the whole of this Act or some provisions would be introduced in different parts of the province. Referring to the problem of how to recoup the enormous loss in the revenue of the province the Hon'ble Mr. Dube said that it was a very difficult question. The Government were considering the possibility of imposing various taxation on different matters such as Agricultural Income-tax, but they did not know how far they would be able to recoup the loss by these taxation measures. But supposing, continued the hon. Mr. Dube, they could not make good the whole loss, that was no justification for putting off such an important social legislation that would surely improve the economic, social and moral condition of the people of this province. The members of the opposition, who spoke on the consideration motion, expressed their sympathy with the principle underlying the Bill but asked the Government to move cautiously in view of the financial loss that this poor province was likely to incur when it would be put into operation. The discussion had not concluded when the House rose for the day.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

9th. SEPTEMBER :—The whole of to-day was taken up for the discussion of demands for the supplementary grants. The opposition tabled cut motions to every item of demand for eliciting certain information. The cut motions were, however, withdrawn after the Ministers had supplied the required informations.

The Hon. Mr. Nityananda Kanungo, Minister for P. W. D., moved for a supplementary demand of Rs. 10,050 for the repair of certain embankments. The Hon. Mr. Kanungo pointed out that these repairs were urgent and they could not be held over till the next year. By moving a cut motion of Rs 100 to the demand, Mr. M. G. Patnaik wanted to know what the policy of the Government was with regard to the embankments. Sometime ago they learnt that the Government favoured the policy of demolishing the embankments. Now they were asking money for repairing them. So, he wanted to know the policy that the Government were following. The Hon. Mr. Kanungo, in reply, pointed out that the Flood Committee of 1928 recommended the demolition of embankments. Now the Flood Advisory Committee, consisting of Mr. English, Mr. Rangiya and Mr. Vipin had recommended that these embankments should be strengthened. The Government had accepted the recommendation of the Flood Advisory Committee. So, these repairs were necessary. The cut motion was withdrawn and the demand voted.

The Assembly also voted Rs. 18,840 for sinking two tube wells, one either at Kakatpur or Brahmagiri area in the district of Puri and the other at Raitang Pat in the district of Cuttack. During the discussion the hon. Mr. Nityananda Kanungo pointed out that the cost of sinking two tube wells might seem to be heavy but these were different for the ordinary tube wells. The size of the proposed wells would be 5 inches each to a depth not exceeding 275 feet each. Further these wells would be installed in far-off villages and the contractors would have to carry the materials for sinking these wells by cart from the railway stations to distant places. These wells would be installed as experimental measures to irrigate about 300 acres of land in each area.

The Hon. Mr. Bodhrum Dube moved for a supplementary demand of Rs.

8,500 for clothing of prisoners in jails. In moving the demand the Hon. Mr. Dube pointed out that hitherto cloth required for prison clothing were manufactured by jail labour with mill yarn. It had since been decided by the Government that khaddar yarn should be substituted for mill yarn and that all prison clothing should be in khadi. The total quantity of cloth required for the purpose during the year 1939-40 would be approximately 26,000 yards. Out of this quantity, the jails of the province which had looms, would be able to manufacture with khaddar yarn about 10,550 yards and the balance of 15,450 yards would have to be purchased from the A. I. S. A. The cost of manufacturing 10,550 yards of khadi cloth in jails would be Rs. 5,203-4 approximately and that of purchasing 15,450 yards of khadi cloth would be Rs. 7,725. Thus the total cost of khadi cloth of 26,000 yards, partly manufactured in the jails and partly purchased would be about Rs. 12,918. Had the whole quantity of cloth been manufactured with mill yarns by jail labour, the total approximate cost would have been Rs. 4,313-4 only. So, he moved for the supplementary demand of Rs. 8,500 to meet the extra cost likely to be involved during the current year. Mr. *Brojo Sundar Das*, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, moved that the demand be reduced by Rs. 100. In moving the cut motion Mr. Das said that he might probably be regarded as an iconoclast for trying to reduce the demand on khadi. But he wanted to make it clear at the outset that he was not against khadi. He would not have objected if khadi was spun and woven in jails by the convicts themselves for their clothing. He characterised the heavy expenses for buying hand spun yarn for manufacturing khadi for the clothing of the convicts as uneconomic. After all, Mr. Das pointed out that the mill made cloths, now used by the convicts, were indigenous products and as such swadeshi. He could not see any reason why the Government had launched upon this huge expenses for substituting mill cloths with khadi. Rather the Government should have tried to manufacture khadi with jail labour than purchasing them at such huge expense from the A. I. S. A.

Mr. *Raj Krishna Bose*, Parliamentary Secretary, in replying, stated that Mr. Brojo Sundar Das declared that he was not an iconoclast and was not against khadi. But it was surprising that in the face of this pious statement he had taken cudgels against the Government for substituting the clothing of the convicts with khadi. The Government were so long manufacturing the clothing of the convicts with mill yarns purchased from the Nagpur and Cawnpur mills and with jail labour. Now they had decided to substitute hand spun yarn in place of mill yarn. Mr. *M. G. Patnaik*, in supporting the cut motion, said that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi had advised that yarn should be spun by the consumer himself for his use. They were showing lip sympathy to the Congress by purchasing khadi. By taking this move the Government were trying to please the A. I. S. A. He considered this huge expenditure as uneconomic. The Rev. Mr. *E. M. Evans* said that the Province was poor and for that reason the Government could not provide with sufficient funds for the nation-building departments. In view of that it was uneconomic for launching upon this huge expenditure for introducing khadi in jails. The discussion had not concluded when the Assembly adjourned.

#### COURT FEES AMEND. BILL

12th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly to-day passed the Court Fees Act Amendment Bill without any opposition.

#### PROHIBITION BILL (CONTD.)

The House next passed the Prohibition Bill after a debate lasting only five hours, agreement having been reached at informal discussions on certain amendments. When the Bill was introduced Mr. *M. G. Patnaik* voiced his disapproval of the Government's prohibition policy, especially in the poor state of finances of Orissa. Referring to the prohibition policy of the Madras Government, Mr. Patnaik said that while it was introduced in certain districts, the price in other districts had been lowered so that their revenue from the source was not reduced. The Revenue Minister, Mr. *N. Kanungo*, thanking the House for passing the Bill, hoped that the Government would be given the courage and strength to see this experiment through.

15th. SEPTEMBER :—The Assembly finished its business to-day within a few minutes. Mr. *Pyari Sankar Ray*, Mr. *Prabhladas Lath* and *Srimathi Sarala Devi* who had tabled resolutions did not move them. After *Srimathi Sarala Devi* had introduced the Anti-Dowry Bill, the Assembly adjourned *sine die*.

**Special Session—Nagpur—3rd. November 1939****THE TENANCY BILL**

A special session of the Assembly commenced on the 3rd. November 1939 and divided five times in the course of the discussion on the Tenancy Bill, the proportion of voting on the whole being four to one in favour of the Government. 'You are practising camouflage on Malgusars by restraining their rights bit by bit. If you are not giving sufficient compensation now what guarantee is there that you will accede to their just demands in case of absolute abolition in future', said Mr. M. G. Chitnavis opposing the Revenue Member's motion that the report of the select committee on the Bill be taken into consideration at once. He appealed that simply because the Congress was going out of office they should not force on them such a revolutionary legislation in such haste. Khan Bahadur Hidayat Husain said the voice of opposition could not be stifled and warned the Government that a measure passed in such haste would lead to class war. Mr. S. V. Gokhale, Minister of Revenue said that class war would not be caused by a measure of this kind. On the contrary it would obviate class war and lead to general contentment. Refuting the charge of haste, he added, the measure was such as could not be postponed. The House passed the 2nd. and 3rd. readings of the Bill.

**RESOLUTION ON WAR**

Pt. Ravi Sankar Sukla, the Premier then rose and moved the resolution on war. He asked, 'What inducement is there for India to join the war except as a slave fighting in defence of his master? Are we to wait till the end of this devastating war in which we are asked to take part before we know what the war aims are? Must a vast number of human beings suffer unto death without even knowing definitely what they die for? He added that answers to the above questions were found neither in the Viceroyal Declaration nor in the speech of Sir Samuel Hoare and as long as they were not forthcoming India as a nation would continue to refuse to participate willingly in the present war. 'As I have stated this is not a matter of satisfaction but one of deep sorrow to us. While refusing to cooperate we shall continue to pray for the dawn of reason on the British horizon so that Britain may yet see the error of its ways and grasp the hand of cooperation and friendship, which only a free India can extend in a struggle of this magnitude. What makes the situation infinitely tragic is that instead of making honest efforts to appreciate the Indian stand-point Sir Samuel thought it fit to deliver to the Indian National Congress.' Premier Shukla said that in the existing political conditions in this country it was only in the provinces that some sort of responsible Government was functioning and it was expected that the British Government before they plunged India into war would consult the Governments of these provinces. In comparatively minor matters the central Government had been consulting the provincial Governments and it was, therefore, all the more surprising that in such a grave matter as participation in a European war no one was consulted and India was straightaway made a belligerent nation. 'Nothing in recent times has brought home to us as this act of the British Government the inferiority of status that India occupies in the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations,' added the Premier. Critically analysing the statements made by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, Premier Shukla said that they would be failing in their duty if they did not take note of these pronouncements and did not voice disappointment and resentment which they had created in the minds of the people of these provinces whom they represented in this House. He submitted that India's case was unanswerable and could not be resisted by England without exposing her to the ridicule of the world, but unfortunately both for England and for India an attempt was being made to ridicule the demand itself with the result that this country was faced with a conflict which perhaps might prove to be unprecedented in her history. Referring to Sir Samuel Hoare's remarks in the House of Commons that he did not desire a waste of all those efforts which he and other British statesmen had made to bring to an end the grim chapters of non-cooperation and to make it easier for the Indians and the British to work together, Premier Shukla confessed that he had hoped that the 'grim chapters' actually ended and India would get her birth-right without any further struggle and suffering. It was in that hope that they accepted office in 1937 and it was in that hope that they worked day and night in not only ameliorating the lot of the suffering people but also to dissipate the doubts, if they really existed, of the British people that Indians could successfully shoulder the responsibility of

managing their finances and maintaining law and order in their own country. The fact that we have proved our fitness for self-government has not brought us nearer to our goal. Now another bogey has been trotted out before us—the bogey of minorities. The Premier added: 'By now who is so ignorant as not to know that it is a Nazi technique first to foment communal bitterness in a free people and then to make it a reason for depriving them of their freedom? The only difference is that while the Nazis use communal differences for conquering a free nation, the British statesman are using it to perpetuate their conquest of the Indian people.' He said that the communal problem, not being peculiar to India, could be solved elsewhere. There must be a reasonable solution which could be found provided the third party left the field or came forward as a peacemaking factor. 'But unfortunately for us the third party is not an disinterested entity but one which consciously or unconsciously takes the advantages of these communal bickerings.' Laying emphasis on the communal question at this juncture was a shortsighted policy and was as dangerous as playing with fire, added the Prime Minister. 'I could have understood Germany trying on her own account to stir up communal trouble with a view to creating a state of anarchy in this country. What is surprising is that it is the British statesmen themselves who are playing the enemy's game.' Premier Shukla warned: 'The enemies of England, be they open or covert, have ample material in India to work upon. Many amongst the communalists, be they Hindus or Muslims, have a fascination for the fascist theories. And yet thanks to the unthinking attitude of England a large number of people, sincere in their own way and drawn from all communities, look upon Russia and her communist theory as a panacea for all ills of this unhappy country. If the British Government, Princes and various communities cannot solve the Indian problem, more and more people in desperation will look for a solution from quarters which we have learnt to hate but which the younger generation is learning to look up to with expectancy.' Concluding the Premier said: 'I would only ask Sir Samuel Hoare to remember that the prospect of repression which he holds out to us may or may not break the spirit of this nation but it will certainly provide German propagandists with stories of atrocities which would put the much-talked of Nazi atrocities in Czechoslovakia into shade. These atrocities, if and when practised, will shock the conscience of the world much more than the German atrocities as they would be perpetrated upon an unarmed population and non-violent resisters. Yes, it seems another and more grim period in the history of British rule in India is in sight and the nation will need all spiritual courage that it can muster to meet the threat given by Sir Samuel on behalf of the British Government. I have no doubt that if the threat does materialise and we are forced to resist it we shall be embarking upon a task with an easy conscience. Our objective being nothing else than our own freedom and that of other suppressed nations, our weapon being nothing but complete non-violence we can go forward on our path with a conviction that truth and justice is on our side and though truth and justice might get a temporary setback still they are bound to triumph in the end.'

The Premier's speech which was delivered in Hindi was concluded amidst cheers and shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'. Of 11 amendments to the resolution two were not moved and two were ruled out.

Mr. P. L. Dhagat (Congress) raised a point of order that the Muslim League amendment moved by Mr. Rauf Shah was irrelevant to the main subject of the resolution. Mr. Rauf Shah consequently replaced the original amendment by the following:

'Inasmuch as the democratic parliamentary system of Government under the present constitution has failed and proved utterly unsuited to the conditions and genius of the people this House recommends to the Government to move the Government of India and through them the British Government to take steps to review fully and revise *de novo* the entire problem of India's future constitution apart from the Government of India Act, 1935, and convey to them the opinion of this House that, when with a view to obtaining cooperation of different sections of the Indian people in the prosecution of the present war the British Government resolves to make a declaration about the granting of further constitutional reforms to India, it should not make any commitment in principles or otherwise without the approval and consent of the Muslim League which alone represents and speaks on behalf of the Muslims of India.'

Thakur Chhedi Lal's (Congress) amendment recording fullest confidence in the Ministers and calling upon them to tender resignations was objected to by the



Opposition on the ground that unless no-confidence was expressed in the Ministry there was no necessity of recording confidence. The Speaker, however, held the amendment in order.

Mr. *Rauf Shah*, moving the Muslim League amendment, regretted the Premier calling the minority a bogey. The Government failed to create real confidence in the minds of the minorities and the Muslims sincerely feared that they were not properly protected. He added that during the two-and-half years the Congress should have, with magnanimity, solved the minority question.

While Mr. *Rauf Shah* referred to the judicious settlement of the communal question in Egypt, Mr. *Pande* (Congress) asked whether he was prepared to give the same concession to non-Muslims in other provinces like the Punjab as Zaglul Pasha had given in Egypt whereto Mr. *Rauf Shah* replied that he did not belong to that province (laughter).

Hon. Mr. *Nityananda Kanungo*, Revenue Minister, moved an amendment stating that the Indian situation had not been rightly understood by His Majesty's Government when the statement regarding India was made. He said that the Viceroy's statement totally failed to satisfy Indian aspirations. When they accepted office for constitutional advancement, it was expected that it would be done smoothly, but that hope had been dispelled when the little power, which was visualised under the Government of India Act, was taken away with the amendment Act and other Ordinances.

Mr. *A. S. Khan* moved an amendment for the substitution of the resolution. Other amendments were on the lines of the Muslim League policy for the reconsideration of the Indian constitution "*do novo*." They severely criticised the Congress attitude towards Muslims, especially Congress Governments' administrations. Democracy was unsuited for India and it was clear from the past history of India. All the same they supported democracy which should not be on the lines laid down in the present Act and practised in the Congress Provinces.

The *Raja Bahadur of Khalskote* moved an amendment, which wanted to extend full co-operation to the British Govt. and wanted examination of India's claim to Dominion Status after the war incorporating adequate safeguards for minorities. He said whatever their differences with the British Government it was not the time to press their demands. This was a time when everybody should combine in the common objective, namely, destruction of aggressive Nazism. He concluded that it would be better if they strove for unity in India first.

The *Raja Bahadur of Khallikote's* amendment was put first to vote and lost by 37 to 16 votes. It was noteworthy that Mr. *Kinai Samal*, the only Harijan member in the Opposition, voted against the amendment. Mr. *Sobhan Khan's* amendment was also lost by 37 to 15 votes, one member remaining neutral. The Premier's resolution on war (as amended by Hon. Mr. *Kanungo*) was then put to the vote and carried by 36 to 16 votes, one member remaining neutral. The House was then *prorogued*.

## The Punjab Legislative Assembly

Winter Session—Lahore—24th. October to 12th. December 1939

### THE TRADE EMPLOYEES BILL

The winter session of the Punjab Legislative Assembly commenced at Lahore on the 24th. October 1939. After interpellations, Sir *Chhotram*, Minister for Development, introduced the Punjab Trade Employees Bill which sought to improve the working conditions of shop employees in the province. He said that the Bill had been supported by every one. Even the shop employers had supported it. The Minister moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon. Opposition members, *Chaudhury Krishna Gopal Dutt* and *Diwan Chamantal* urged that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee so that it could be passed at an early date. Thereupon the Minister agreed to refer the Bill to a Select Committee consisting of twelve members to report by November 15. The motion was adopted unanimously.

## DEBTORS' PROTECTION AMEND. BILL

Sir *Sunder Singh Majithia*, Minister for Revenue, introduced the Punjab Debtors Protection Amendment Bill, which sought to remove certain minor flaws in the Act. Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava* moved an amendment that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. The amendment was rejected by 81 votes to 41. The Bill was then considered clause by clause and passed. The House then adjourned till Oct. 26.

## BAN ON CONGRESS LEADER

26th. OCTOBER :—The Punjab Government's ban on the entry of Acharya Narendra Deb into the Punjab and his arrest on July 1 last at Rohtak, when he was being taken out in a procession in connection with a political conference to be held there, formed the subject matter of an adjournment motion to-day. The motion, which was tabled by *Lala Dunschand*, was defeated by 82 votes against 42.

There were forty adjournment motions on the agenda. When the list was taken up by the Speaker, the first motion, relating to the removal of Congress Flag by two British soldiers from the Khadi Bhandar, Simla, was automatically dropped as the author, *Sardar Hari Singh* (Congress) was not in the House. He was recently sentenced to nine months' imprisonment under the Defence of India Ordinance.

## FATORIES AMENDMENT BILL

27th. OCTOBER :—The measures to be adopted by the Punjab Government for industrialisation of the Province were considered to-day. Sir *Chhoturam* introduced the Factories (Punjab Amendment) Bill which sought to regulate the establishment of large factories, in order to avoid congestion and uneconomic competition. The Bill proposed to levy fees for registration of all factories (including the existing ones), to create authority for fixing scales of fees and to prescribe procedure and penalties. Sir Chhoturam's motion for the circulation of the Bill was passed by 75 votes to 36.

## STATE AID TO INDUSTRIES AMEND. BILL

Sir *Chhoturam*'s motion that the Punjab State Aid to Industries Amendment Bill be referred to a Select Committee was also passed. The Bill sought to encourage cottage and village industries by giving State aid and aimed to meet certain difficulties which already existed or were apprehended from the incidence of Hindu joint family system and the existence of the Land Alienation Act. The House then adjourned till the 30.

## ARRESTS UNDER DEFENCE ACT

30th. OCTOBER :—The arrest of political workers in the Punjab under the Defence of India Act formed the subject of an adjournment motion to-day. The motion which was tabled by *Chaudhri Krishna Gopal Dutt*, was defeated by 85 votes to 40. The Government opposed the grant of leave on the ground that no specific matter had been mentioned in the motion. Mir *Maqbool Mahmud*, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, argued that the motion related to the general policy of the Government which could only be discussed through a substantive motion. *Diwan Chaman Lal*, Deputy Leader of the Congress Party, submitted that every adjournment motion was a censure motion. As regards the contention that no specific matter had been mentioned in the motion, *Diwan Chaman Lal* asked whether the action taken by the Government under the Defence of India Act was not a specific matter. The Premier, Sir *Sikander Hyat Khan*, expressed the view that the House was not responsible for the passage of the Defence of India Act. He had no powers to stop the District Magistrates from taking action under the said Act. If the District Magistrates abused the powers under the Act, their action could be questioned in a court of law. Concluding, the Premier declared that he could not refuse to co-operate with the Central Government in the working of the Act. *Diwan Chaman Lal* put forward the argument that since the Punjab Government's machinery and expense was used in the enforcement of this Act, the Punjab Government was responsible for its working. The Speaker, giving his ruling, said whether the Act was framed by the Government of India or the Punjab Government, when action was taken in this province under that Act, the administrative responsibility was of the Punjab Government. He held that the motion was in order.

When the motion was taken up for discussion, *Chaudhri Krishna Gopal Dutt* averred that some persons were arrested with the consent of the Premier.

Therefore, the Punjab Government could not divest itself of the responsibility in the matter. Mr. Dutt particularly complained that some persons who had spoken at a certain conference before the promulgation of the Defence Ordinance and long before its publication in the popular press, were arrested. He concluded by saying that in all the Congress ruled provinces, only two or three persons had been arrested under this Act so far. A number of speakers participated in the debate. Sir *Sikander Hyat Khan* assured the House that the arrest had not been made indiscriminately. He had given explicit instructions to the Deputy Commissioners that only those who made speeches in connection with war should be arrested under the Act. The actual arrests had not been made under his instructions. The Premier declared that speeches made before the outbreak of war could not come under the purview of the Act. If any such arrest had been made the Government would withdraw the prosecution. There had been no vindictive motive in the arrests as the Unionist Party was far too powerful to be afraid of any one. As regards the number of arrests in the Punjab being more than in any other province, the Premier said that the question of war and recruitment was of great importance in the Punjab as it was the Punjab which would have to defend India in the event of an invasion. It was, therefore, his duty to prevent violation of this law. He would not spare even his son or the biggest personality in the land in doing so. Winding up the debate, *Chaudhri Krishna Gopal Dutt* demanded from the Premier an assurance that those persons who had been arrested for making speeches before the publication of the Defence Ordinance would be released. He reminded the Premier of his declaration that he was co-operating with the British Government because after the war, India would get full Dominion Status, and asked what was his attitude now that the Viceroy had definitely stated that India would get Dominion Status by stages. Speaking again, the Premier repeated that after the war, India would undoubtedly get Dominion Status. He deplored that the Opposition were not willing to concede to their own brethren what they were themselves demanding of the British. If only they acted on his (the Premier's) advice, they would get Dominion Status in fifteen days. The motion was defeated by 85 votes to 40.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS REJECTED

**31st. OCTOBER** :—After a lively debate lasting over ninety minutes, the Assembly rejected to-day an adjournment motion of Dr. *Santram Seth* (Congress) to discuss "the tragic death of Nathu Kumar in Amritsar district through tortures by Police authorities." *Malik Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana*, Minister for Law and Order, said that immediately after the death of Nathu, a First Class Magistrate had held an enquiry. According to the findings of that enquiry Nathu's son was taken into custody in connection with a theft case as the stolen property was recovered from his house. Apparently, Nathu took this disgrace to heart and losing his head committed suicide by jumping into the well. The post-mortem examination also showed that death was caused by drowning. The motion was not pressed to a division.

The *Speaker* disallowed another motion for adjournment of the House to discuss the statement issued by the Premier offering unconditional help to the British Government. He ruled that the motion formed the subject-matter of the various war resolutions which would be discussed on November 3.

#### FRESH AVENUES FOR TAXATION

**2nd. NOVEMBER** :—An important decision to impose a duty on the sale of all commercial commodities other than agricultural produce, particularly those the consumption of which is mainly confined to the richer classes, was arrived at to-day. A member of the Unionist Party moved the resolution making the above-mentioned proposal as a non-official motion. It was strongly opposed by the Opposition. An amendment suggesting the levy of a duty on all articles of luxury, particularly those imported from foreign countries, was moved by the Congress Party, but the *Speaker* ruled it out holding that the notice of the amendment was not given in time. Speaking in support of the resolution, *Choudhri Sir Ghothurem*, Minister for Development, claimed to be a staunch supporter of Swadeshi goods and said that the Government had issued instructions to give preference to Swadeshi articles. Proceeding, the Minister revealed that the resolution was actually a party resolution and through this resolution the Government wanted to have the verdict of the House on the proposal of raising fresh taxation. He further informed the House that the resolution, if passed, would be given practical shape immediately.

With this tax, the Minister said, the Government proposed to develop industries and to expand the irrigation system. This was the only avenue of fresh taxation as the Zamindars were already paying a heavy taxation. The resolution was carried by 81 votes to 27.

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL DEBTORS

Another important resolution, recommending to the Government to take necessary steps to exempt from attachment or sale the main residential house of a non-agriculturist judgment debtor, whose total assets did not exceed Rs. 5,000 in value, was moved by *Tikka Jagjit Singh Bedi* (Unionist). The Opposition wanted to move an amendment reducing the sum of Rs. 5,000. The *Speaker* disallowed the motion. Dr. Sir *Gokulchand Narang*, opposing the resolution, argued that if the resolution was passed, the non-agriculturists would be rendered homeless because in order to raise a loan for carrying on their business, they would have to sell their houses as they would not be able to mortgage it. The debate on the resolution had not concluded when the House adjourned for the day.

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

**3rd. to 6th. NOVEMBER:—**The Unionist Party's resolution on the war offering unconditional support to Britain and the amendments moved by the various parties were discussed to-day. The main resolution, which was moved by *Sardar Bahadur Gurbachan Singh* (Unionist), offered unconditional support to Britain and urged that it should be made clear that the constitution of India should be examined afresh at the end of the war with a view to the immediate attainment of the objective to Dominion status, with effective protection of the due rights of the minorities and other sections and in consultation with and agreement of all the parties concerned. To this resolution Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, Leader of the Opposition (Congress), moved an amendment "viewing with grave concern the curtailment of powers and activities of provincial governments," making India a participant in the war without her consent, characterizing the Viceroy's statement as wholly unsatisfactory and disappointing and offering co-operation to Britain if the principles of democracy and self-determination were applied immediately to the Government of India, with due safeguards for the minority interests. Speakers of the Ministerial party supported the Unionist party's resolution, mainly on the ground that it was a question of protecting their own hearths and homes. They demanded that full Dominion status should be granted to India after the war. All the Opposition speakers (except two, who favoured the Unionist Party resolution), spoke in favour of the amendment. *Sir William Roberts*, the only European member and President of the European Association, said that his Association had full sympathy with Indian aspirations and would be too glad if they could get an acceptable form of Dominion status to-day. The debate was continued on Monday, the 6th. November, when *Mian Iftikaruddin*, secretary of the Congress Party, said that his party had taken up the correct attitude in wanting to know before India entered the war as to what they were fighting for. *Malik Barkat Ali* (Moslem League) did not support the resolution, as it demanded Dominion Status. As a Moslem Leaguer he demanded complete independence; nor would he support the Congress amendment. He wanted a settlement of all minorities questions before the establishment of independence. *Diwan Chamanlal* was of opinion that the debate was being held on a completely unreal basis. The resolution, he said, condemned aggression and Nazism but the Punjab Government themselves believed in these two doctrines. This was evident from the number of arrests that had taken place during the last two months and the confinement in prison of a member of the House without trial. If the resolution were adopted, said the speaker, there could be no political advance, for it demanded that Dominion Status should be established "only in consultation with all parties concerned." During the last war, he added, there was talk of self-determination, which had been forgotten soon after the hostilities ended. At the beginning of this war there had been talk of liberty and freedom—promises were already being forgotten. *Nawab Musaffar Khan* (Unionist), in a brief speech, whole-heartedly supported the resolution. He advised the members not to be misled by catch-words and catch-phrases and declared, amid applause, that the Punjab was with the Premier in the matter of co-operating with the British Government. Dr. *Gokulchand Narang*, a former Minister of the Punjab, expressed the view that the mental attitude of the Punjabi was to fight whenever he got an opportunity. Even if the Premier had made a declaration opposing India's participation in the war the

Punjabi would have fought. Hundreds and thousands of recruits would have come forward. (There were Ministerial interruptions challenging this statement). He suspected that the real motive of the resolution was to pass a reactionary motion opposing the grant of Dominion Status without the consent of "all sections of the population." It was necessary, he said, for the sake of defending India's hearths and homes, to help the British Government and fight in this war, but at the same time all shades of Indians must fully and entirely endorse the demands made by the Congress from the British Government. *Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan* was cheered when he rose to reply to the debate. He referred at the outset to the failure of the Delhi talks but expressed the hope that the efforts made by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah would not go in vain. The resolution before the House, he said, was of the greatest importance, for on it the destiny of the whole of India depended. It deserved dispassionate and calm consideration. Every honest man had expressed his sympathy with the Allies and every eminent Indian had said that India did not want bargaining. That being so, why did some people say that they would not co-operate unless Britain declared her aims toward this country? This was bargaining of a most despicable kind. In the course of his speech the Premier asked the Opposition members to show an example in history when words had won independence. "It is deeds which have won independence," he declared. Continuing, he said he would spurn a friend who would like to take advantage of him in his difficulty. "Give Britain whole-hearted, unconditional and unequivocal support, and at the end of the war the power that you use in favour of Britain can be used against her if you do not obtain your objective." Proceeding, *Sir Sikandar* referred to the declaration made by *Sir Samuel Hoare* in his recent speech in Parliament. He said that the declaration was clear enough. It meant that after the war India would get the same Dominion Status which was now being enjoyed by the other Dominions. He advised the Opposition members to believe in what *Sir Samuel* had solemnly declared. People, said the Premier, had been disappointed with the Viceroy's declaration. He expressed the view that the Indians themselves were responsible for the disappointing nature of that statement, for the major political party had asked the Viceroy to make a declaration without a word about the other parties. He eulogized the Viceroy, characterizing him as a great friend of India who had the confidence of not only the major party but of every section of India. He was sure that the Viceroy would eventually succeed in bringing about harmony and unity. Referring to communal unity, the Premier said that every attempt was being made to solve this problem. He did not believe that the British Government were standing in the way of their progress. If only the majority community were generous towards the minority the question would be solved without difficulty. The Congress was undoubtedly a big political organization but it did not command the confidence of the whole country.

All amendment's were rejected and the Unionist party's resolution was pressed to a division and carried by 104 votes to 39.

#### ENTERTAINMENT TAX

The Assembly passed another taxation measure which would bring an annual income of Rs. 80,000 to the exchequer of the province. The measure was an order of the Governor prescribing rates of entertainment duty. Hitherto, entertainment tickets upto the value of four annas were exempt but now, with the passage of this order, a tax of six pies would be levied on these tickets. The Opposition party strongly objected to the measure on the ground that it was a direct hit on the poor classes. It was pointed out behalf of the Government that the cinema was a luxury and not a necessity of life. If they could not pay six pies, they should not go to cinemas and save the money.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTION

7th. NOVEMBER:—An adjournment motion moved by *Maulvi Masha Ali Asher* (Ahrar), seeking to censure the Government for their failure to stop public motor vehicles under the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939 from picking up passengers from unapproved motor stands, was rejected to-day. Commending the motion to the House, the mover said that this practice was causing inconvenience to the public and was also resulting in numerous accidents. *Major Khizer Hyat Khan Tivana*, Minister for Public Works, replying to the debate, pointed out that under the present rules of the Motor Vehicles Act, the Government had no power to stop this practice. He, however, assured the House that new rules empowering the Government to stop this practice would come

into force in April 1940 and then only the grievance embodied in the motion could be remedied. The House then adjourned till November 20.

#### DEMAND FOR PRESS SECURITIES

**20th. NOVEMBER :—**By 50 votes to 19, the Assembly rejected the adjournment motion of *Lala Deshbandhu Gupta*, (Congress), which sought to censure the Government for "abusing the Press Emergency Powers Act, 1931, in demanding securities from a large number of newspapers and presses." Moving the adjournment motion, Mr. Gupta said that he was surprised to know that during their two years' regime, the Unionist Government had demanded securities from over 300 newspapers and 67 presses, the total amount being Rs. 2,22,000. This action of the Government, he thought, was intended to throttle the press. By taking action against so many newspapers the Government had proved that it was a "bureaucratic government" not a democratic one. Before Provincial Autonomy was established, the average amount of security demanded in a year was about Rs. 19,450 as compared with Rs. 1,11,000 per year after the inauguration of Provincial Autonomy. Proceeding, Mr. Gupta stated that in 99 per cent of the cases, securities were demanded when the papers filed declarations. He wondered how action could be taken before guilt was proved. He quoted instances in which securities were demanded from papers which had nothing to do with politics or communalism. He also quoted from the speech of Sir James Grigg in the Central Assembly to show that the Press Emergency Act was to be used only when the newspapers incited violence. He could not understand what violence had been preached by those papers which had not even been born. Mr. Gupta compared the position in the Punjab to that in the provinces governed by Congress Governments to prove that the Unionist Government had tried to cripple the press in the Punjab. *Sir Sikander Hyat Khan*, Premier, observed that a wrong inference had been drawn from the statement laid on the table of the Punjab Assembly in reply to a question by *Lala Deshbandhu Gupta*. The statement included securities required by the Provincial Government and initial securities demanded by the District Magistrates. The latter were always refundable after three months provided no action was taken by the Provincial Government during that period. The figures regarding applicants were in no way abnormal as compared with the preceding years. In the case of demands of initial securities by District Magistrates, 90 per cent of the securities represented demands from new ventures of mushroom growth. The would-be publishers almost invariably had no financial backing, no experience in journalism and were frequently dummies. The total sum of Rs. 2,22,000 was inflated by one person trying more than once to get a declaration. Except in the case of one printing press, the initial securities of all newspapers and presses, whatever their amount deposited by the new declarants, were refunded to them after three months. Thus the actual amount held by the Government in the form of deposits made by newspapers and printing presses was only Rs. 27,500 and not Rs. 2,22,000 as alleged by the mover. The Premier pointed out that when a person filed in good faith a declaration for starting a newspaper or printing press, his political convictions were not a basis for a demand for security. Security was only demanded in accordance with the terms of the Indian press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931. The Premier quoted facts and figures to show that the number of newspapers as well as the amount of securities demanded were much less than compared with the pre-Autonomy period. Concluding, he assured the House that the securities were not demanded on political grounds. The motion was put to vote and defeated by 50 votes to 19.

#### HAND-CUFFING OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

**21st. NOVEMBER :—**After two hours' lively debate to-day the Assembly rejected by 53 votes to 25 the adjournment motion of *Lala Deshbandhu Gupta*, (Congress), which sought to censure the Government for the unsatisfactory nature of the reply given by the Premier to the short notice question regarding the handcuffing of *Sardar Hari Singh*, M. L. A. Mr. Gupta said that the handcuffing of an honourable member of the House had pained not only him but also the other members of the House. He quoted a letter of *Sardar Hari Singh* in which the latter had repudiated the charge that he was handcuffed at the time of arrest because his behaviour was intemperate. *Sardar Hari Singh* stated that he was calm, cool and dignified at the time of arrest. Mr. Gupta asserted that the handcuffing of *Sardar Hari Singh* was against the police rules, because his offence was not non-bailable. Mr. Gupta regretted that even after the introduction of Provincial autonomy, there was, in the Punjab, still distinction between Indian and European prisoners. The European

prisoners were not hand-cuffed even if they committed a non-bailable offence. Replying to the debate, the *Premier* said that it gave him pain to learn that Sardar Hari Singh, for whom he had great regard, was handcuffed by the police at the time of his arrest. He immediately ordered an enquiry and the result of that enquiry was conveyed by him to the House. He himself did not believe that Sardar Hari Singh had lost his temper but the report which he had received from the District Magistrate showed that his behaviour was intemperate. He wondered what agency he should use for holding an enquiry to find out the truth. He knew that there were black sheep among the police but the entire police force was not to be blamed. Concluding, the *Premier* appealed to the members of the Opposition not to bring forward adjournment motions on ordinary matters and waste the time of the House. He was always prepared to satisfy the members with regard to any matter on which they sought information. The adjournment motion was, however, defeated by 53 votes to 25.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS

**24th. NOVEMBER :—**Supplementary demands for grants amounting to Rs. 64,77,470 towards expenditure on the construction of the Thal Irrigation project, famine relief, war publicity, etc., were voted to-day. Out of fourteen demands, only those relating to the construction of the Thal Project and famine relief were discussed. The rest were passed by applying the guillotine. A division was claimed by the Opposition on the demand for grant of Rs. 75,000 towards war publicity. The demand was granted by 64 votes to 27. Diwan Chamanlal, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, protested that not enough time was allotted for discussion of such important supplementary demands for grants. He said that the demand for a programme like war publicity deserved much more time than had been allotted.

The demand for a grant of Rs. 25,94,780 towards expenditure on the Thal Project was opposed by the Opposition through a cut motion. The Opposition argued that the Project would not be a profitable one as most of the area to be irrigated by this Project was sandy tract. They also pointed out that on account of the outbreak of war, the prices of machinery had risen abnormally and the scheme would entail heavy expenditure on the exchequer. Replying to the debate, *Sir Sunder Singh Majithia*, Minister for Revenue, said that they had very carefully examined the tract and the Government were of opinion that the project would prove productive. The *Premier*, speaking next, expressed surprise that the Opposition members were opposing a measure which would benefit the poor peasants. The aim of the Unionist Party, he said, was to provide irrigation throughout the province so that there should be no famine hereafter in any part of the Province.

A little heat was engendered when the demand for the grant relating to famine relief was under discussion. A member of the Opposition made certain allegations against a Famine Relief Officer. The *Premier* suggested that members should not abuse the privilege of the House by making such allegations. He challenged the member to repeat the allegations outside the chamber. *Diwan Chamanlal*, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, intervening, said that the member of the Opposition had every right to criticise the conduct of the public officers as the House was the supreme body. The *Speaker* requested the members not to use defamatory language and lower the level of the debate.

#### CITY OF LAHORE CORPORATION BILL

**27th. NOVEMBER :—**The hon. *Major Khisar Hyat Khan Tiwana*, Minister for Public Works, introduced the City of Lahore Corporation Bill, drafted on the lines of the Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi Corporation Acts. Moving for reference of the Bill to a Select Committee consisting of 25 members, the Minister said that the present Government, when it came into power, inherited the superseded Municipal Committee of Lahore. The Government took immediate steps to improve the conditions. There were two obvious courses open to them with regard to the future of the Committee, either to revive the Committee or to set up a Corporation. After due consideration, the Government came to the conclusion that the only way out of the difficulty was to set up a Corporation on the lines of the Karachi Corporation. The Bill provided for three separate authorities—a Corporation, a Standing Committee and a Chief Executive Officer. The Corporation Council would consist of 58 members, 6 to be elected by special constituencies, 17 to be appointed by the Provincial Government and the rest to be elected. Opposition members opposed the motion for a select committee. *Chaudhary, Aftab Gopal, Dutt (Congress)*

moved for circulation of the Bill for eliciting public opinion thereon. He characterised the Bill as an anti-democratic and re-actionary measure and appealed to the Government not to rush it through. He said that the provision for the appointment of an executive Officer by the Government was a negation of democracy and an insult to local self-government. *Begum Rashida Latif Baji* (Unionist), opposing the Government motion, said that the Bill had been drafted by the Administrator of the Lahore Municipality, who knew nothing of the city of Lahore. *Malik Barkat Ali*, (Ministerialist) urged that the Bill should not be rushed through but should be given the widest publicity. *Lala Sita Ram* (Independent), supporting the circulation motion, reviewed the history of the old Municipal Committee and said that the Corporation Bill was an attempt to take away all the powers of local self-government. The main cause of the failure of the Lahore Municipal Committee, he said, was the provision of separate electorates. That provision was embodied in the present Bill. In his opinion there could be no improvement in the condition of Lahore till the system of joint electorates was introduced. The discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned.

#### ALLOWANCE TO MINISTERS

28th. NOVEMBER :—*Lala Deshbandhu Gupta* (Congress) sought the leave of the House to-day to move an adjournment motion relating to the "evasive and unsatisfactory reply given by the Government to a question eliciting information about the travelling allowances drawn by the Ministers." The *Speaker* pointed out that the motion amounted to criticising the conduct of the Government which could only be done through a substantive motion. A discussion followed on the question of the admissibility of the motion. The *Premier* assured the House that salaries and travelling allowances were paid to the Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretaries in accordance with the rules sanctioned by the House. If the Opposition had any doubt about the conduct of the Ministers or the Parliamentary Secretaries they could bring forward a substantive motion. He asked the Opposition members not to raise such frivolous questions and waste the time of the House. Such questions served no useful purpose. He further assured the House that no Minister or Parliamentary Secretary had drawn allowance for travelling outside the province except when on official business. Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, Leader of the Opposition Party, said that the Opposition was entitled to know what money was being spent by the Ministerial party on party propaganda. The matter was ultimately dropped on an assurance being given by the Premier that if a fresh notice of the question were given, he would supply the necessary information.

#### LAHORE COMPENSATION BILL (CONTD.)

Discussion on the Opposition Party's motion for the circulation of the City of Lahore Corporation Bill was next resumed. *Mian Abdul Aziz*, former President of the Lahore Municipal Committee was cheered when he rose to support the circulation motion. He said that the Bill which was full of defects had been brought forward only to stop the agitation for the revival of the Municipal Committee. The Bill, as framed, would not serve the best interests of the city. Proceeding, *Mian Abdul Aziz* pointed out that the Corporation could not be set up for another couple of years. Therefore fresh elections of the Committee should be held immediately and, in the meantime, the Bill should be circulated for eliciting public opinion. Dr. *Gokulchand Narang*, former Minister for Local Self-Government, defending his action in superseding the Municipal Committee of Lahore, said that due consideration was given to the matter by the then Government before coming to a conclusion. The decision for supersession was unanimously reached. The representation against the supersession was received too late; otherwise he would have restored the Committee. Supporting the circulation motion, Dr. *Narang* said that the Bill was a 'rotten' legislation, therefore it must be circulated for eliciting public opinion. Mr. *K. L. Gauda*, (Independent), supporting the circulation motion, emphasised that there was no reason why the Committee should not be revived. *Begam Shah Nawaz*, a former municipal commissioner, opposed the circulation motion, and said that the Bill was only a draft which undoubtedly had some defects. Those defects could be removed in the Select Committee, she added. She appealed to the Opposition Party not to vote for the Government motion for referring it to a Select Committee. Pandit *Shriram Sharma* and Pt. *Bhagatram* also supported the circulation motion, the discussion on which had not concluded, when the House adjourned till November 30.



Next day, the 30th. November, the Opposition member's main objections to the Bill were, that it was based on undemocratic principles, containing as it did, the principle of nomination, that the interests of the citizens of Lahore proper were not being adequately protected and that the Chief Executive Officer was made responsible to Government rather than to the Corporation. Replying to the debate, the hon. *Major Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana*, Minister for Public Works and Local Self-Government reviewed the working of the past Municipal Committee of Lahore leading to its supersession and charged the old Committee with not providing amenities of life to the citizens of Lahore. The Congress Party's circulation motion was pressed to a division and rejected. Next day, the 1st. December, the Opposition Party decided not to co-operate with the Government on the Select Committee of the City of Lahore Corporation Bill. Before the motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee was put to vote, the Leader of the Opposition Party requested the Government to appoint two more members of the Opposition Party on the Committee. He pointed out that the Opposition Party consisted of 61 members, out of a House of 174, excluding the Speaker and therefore, according to their numerical strength, they must be given one-third representation on the Select Committee. The Premier stated that he did not see eye to eye with the Leader of the Opposition in this respect. He was the Leader of only 36 members and not 61. The hon. *Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana*, Minister in charge of the Bill, said that, before constituting the Select Committee, he had consulted the Leader of the Opposition Party and included his nominees in the Committee. At this late stage, it was not possible for him to take two more members of the Opposition as, according to the rules, the personnel of the Select Committee could not exceed 25. The Opposition Party then moved a motion that Master Haranam Dass (scheduled caste) be appointed to the Committee in place of Sardar Gopal Singh (Unionist). The motion was defeated by 82 votes against 48 votes. The Speaker refused to accept the Opposition's request that each name be put to vote separately. He pointed out that since the inauguration of the Reforms, there had not occurred a single instance, when each name of the members of any Select Committee had been put to vote separately. Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava*, at this stage, informed the Speaker that as a protest against the Government attitude, he was withdrawing his nominees from the Select Committee. The Speaker then put to vote the names of the Committee, excluding those of the Opposition Party's nominees. The motion was carried by 87 against 47 votes.

#### RIISING PRICES IN PUNJAB

4th DECEMBER :—The Speaker, *Sir Shahabuddin*, ruled out of order today the adjournment motion tabled by *Choudhri Krishna Gopal Dutt* (Congress) to discuss "the failure of the Government to check the rising prices of foodstuffs and other articles. Objecting to the leave being granted to the motion, the Premier, *Sir Sikander Hyat Khan* said that the prices went up two weeks ago but now they were coming down. He, however, assured the House that the Government were watching the price movements and that it was premature to discuss the matter. *Choudhri Krishna Gopal Dutt* alleged that there was a general impression in the province that most of the members of the Government had made hundreds and thousands of rupees since the outbreak of the war and that this was why the Government were not checking the rise in the prices. The Premier strongly repudiated the allegations and challenged the mover to bring forward a substantive motion, instead of an adjournment motion. The Premier also drew the attention of the House to the setting up of the Price Control Board in the Punjab and assured the House that the Government would give due consideration to its recommendations. *Sardar Lalsingh* (Congress) informed the Speaker that some members even of the Opposition did not see eye to eye with the mover of the motion on this matter. The Speaker ruled the motion out of order.

#### DEBT REDEMPTION BILL

11th. DECEMBER :—An interesting situation developed to-day when some members of the Ministerial Party claimed a division on a motion of the Opposition Party, and, in the division which followed, the members of the Opposition Party remained neutral, while one of the members of the Unionist Party recorded his vote in favour of the Opposition and all others against it. The motion was thus rejected by 86 votes to 1. The motion in question was for the circulation of the Punjab Relief of Indebtedness (Amendment) Bill, moved by *Lala Duni Chand* (Congress). After a lengthy debate, the Speaker put the motion to a

vote. A member of the Ministerial Party claimed a division while the Opposition Party Leader, Dr. *Gopichand Bhargava* pointed out to the Speaker that the mover as well as the supporters of the motion did not claim a division. The Speaker pointed out that he would go according to the Parliamentary practice. When voting took place, the members of the Opposition Party did not walk into the lobbies. The members of the Ministerial Party only recorded their votes. One of them recorded his vote in favour and others against the motion, which was thus defeated amidst Ministerial cheers. *Diwan Chamantal*, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Party, pointed out to the Speaker that, according to parliamentary procedure those who had shouted 'ayes' must vote for the motion. Some members of the Unionist Party, he said, had shouted 'ayes' but voted against the motion. He urged the Speaker to declare the division null and void. The Speaker postponed his ruling and put the Government motion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee. The motion was carried without a division.

Earlier, the members of the Opposition Party, speaking on the circulation motion, criticised the provisions of the Bill and characterised them as drastic. While fully agreeing with the principle of the Bill for giving debt relief to the poor agriculturists, they pointed out that the Bill being of a drastic nature, must be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion. *Sir Gokulchand Narang* expressed the view that the intention of the Government was to wipe out the entire debts. He saw in the Bill some sinister motive. Replying to the debate, the Premier said that the Bill was before the public for the last two months and those who wanted to express their opinions had done so either through the Press or through the members of this House. He however, welcomed opinions at the Committee stage. He characterised the Opposition motion as a dilatory one and appealed to the rural members of the Opposition Party not to support the motion.

#### VILLAGE PANCHAYATS BILL

12th. DECEMBER:—The question-hour was dispensed with in order to pass the Village Panchayats Bill to-day. Initiating the debate on the third reading, *Sardar Hari Singh* (Congress) strongly opposed the Bill and said that the Opposition Party was more keen and eager than the Government on rehabilitation and reconstruction of Punjab villages so that the villagers might be trained in self-government. But their main objection to the present Bill was that it contained harmful provisions. *Khan Mohd. Yusuf Khan* (Unionist) thought that the Bill markedly improved the Old Act. *Ch. Mohd. Hussain* and *Lala Devraj Sethi* (Congress) opposed the measure. Replying to the debate, *Major Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana*, Minister for Development, said that the village panchayat system was a Swadeshi model of self-government. They were trying to revive that through this Bill and thus confer a great boon on villagers. Regarding franchise, he added, even in the case of the district boards and municipal committees the rule-making power rested with the Government. The Government's intention was to give the widest possible franchise, so that every villager could have a say in the affairs of the village. The minorities and scheduled castes would be fully safeguarded. The third reading of the Bill was passed without a division. At the suggestion of the Premier, the House adjourned for Xmas holidays to meet again on the 8th. January 1940.

## The N. W. Frontier Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Peshawar—14th. to 28th. September 1939

#### OFFICIAL BILL PASSED

The autumn session of the N. W. Frontier Legislative Assembly commenced at Peshawar on the 14th. September 1939 with *Malik Khuda Buz Khan*, Speaker in the chair. The House transacted official business and quickly passed the N. W. F. P. Agriculturist Debtors Relief (Amendment) Bill, the Entertainment Duty (Amendment) Bill and the Primary Education (Amendment) Bill. The Goondas Bill, which aimed at penalising those who indulge in loose, provocative and abusive writings and speeches, was referred to a Select Committee to report by September 25.

## TABLE WATERS BILL

The House then discussed the Table Waters Bill taxing aerated waters at the rate of one pice per bottle. The measure came in for strong opposition from various sections of the House including some Congress members. Mr. *Meharchand Khanna's* motion for circulating the Bill for eliciting public opinion was lost. Rai Bahadur *Chimanlal*, Parliamentary Secretary, who introduced the Bill pointed out that the province was consuming about 1,08,00,000 bottles and said that by taxing them the Government would get an additional revenue of Rs. 1,75,000. He added that the Bill would not affect the poor. The House then adjourned till the next day, the 15th. September, when *Sardar Ajit Singh's* motion that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee to report thereon by September 25 was rejected and the Bill was passed.

## CONTROL OF PRICES

The Assembly held two sessions to-day. The House devoted the afternoon session to the discussion of Mr. *Abdul Rab Nishtar's* adjournment motion relating to the action to control the prices of foodstuffs in the N. W. F. Province in order to prevent undue profiteering. The motion was lost. Replying to the debate, Mr. *Bhanju Ram Gaudhi*, Finance Minister said that increase in the prices of foodstuffs was inevitable following the declaration of war and he assured the mover that the Government had done everything possible under the circumstances, without resorting to drastic measures. The Minister added that the representatives of the Government had conferred with leading merchants of Peshawar and fixed the rates of foodstuffs. Rai Bahadur *Chiman Lal*, Parliamentary Secretary, enumerated the various steps which the Government had taken to regulate the prices of commodities in the province.

## TRIBAL OUTRAGES

18th. SEPTEMBER :—Dr. *Khan Sahib*, the Premier made a speech to-day, describing the measures which were within the scope of the Provincial Government to adopt in order to combat the menace of raids and kidnappers in the southern districts of the Frontier. The occasion was Rai Bahadur *Meharchand Khanna's* adjournment motion to discuss the failure of the Government to take any timely and effective action on the report of the Bannu Raid Enquiry Committee. While not objecting to the motion, the Premier said, "This Government is of the people and we are not afraid of any condemnation. If we are faulty the House will see it but if the people attribute imaginary faults to us we do not mind." The motion was eventually disallowed by the Speaker.

## NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

The House also discussed to-day nonofficial Bills and passed Mr. *Abdur Rabkhan Nishtar's* Punjab Tenancy (N. W. F. P. Amendment) Bill, whereby all male and female heirs of occupancy tenants would be entitled to inherit occupancy rights unconditionally. *Sardar Ajit Singh's* N. W. F. P. Sikh Religious Endowment Bill was referred to a Select Committee. The House refused leave to Rai Bahadur *Meharchand Khanna* and *Lala Tek Chand Dhangra* to introduce the N. W. F. P. Dowry Restriction Bill and the N. W. F. P. Dowry Restraint Bill respectively.

## ADJOURNMENT MOTION

20th. SEPTEMBER :—Ten members of the Muslim League Party in the Assembly headed by their leader, *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, staged a walk-out to-day as a protest against the decision of the Speaker ruling out of order *Sardar Aurangzeb's* adjournment motion to discuss the manner in which the Government conducted the recent selection of candidates for Naib Tehsilدارship. Mr. *Abdul Rashid Khan* was the only member of the Muslim League Party who remained in his seat.

Rai Bahadur *Mehr Chand Khanna* sought leave of the House to discuss his adjournment motion relating to the alleged failure of the Government to prevent and combat the raid committed on Teri (Kohat District) on the night between 28th. and 29th. July last. The mover regretted that, though timely intimation was given to the Government in regard to the possibility of a tribal raid on Teri, yet no precautionary measures were adopted. *Doctor Khan Sahib*, the Premier, said that the condition in the Frontier Province, especially in the districts of Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu and part of Kohat was serious, and it was impossible for the Government to draft police and Frontier Constabulary to every part of the threatened districts. The Government were, however, doing their best to improve the condition

prevailing in those districts. As regards the raid on Teri, the Premier assured the mover that the action taken by the Police and the Frontier Constabulary was most successful and the raiders were not only severely dealt with but almost the entire looted property was recovered. In view of the reply given by the Premier, Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand withdrew his motion.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

**21st. September :—**The House discussed official Bills to-day and quickly passed the N. W. F. P. Motor Vehicles Taxation Amendment Bill, the Courts Regulation Amendment Bill and the Punjab Municipal (North-West Frontier Province Amendment) Bill. Next day, the 22nd. September, the House adopted the report of the Public Accounts Committee on appropriation accounts for 1937-38 and adjourned till the 25th.

#### THE GOONDAS BILL

**25th SEPTEMBER .—**The Assembly considered the North-West Frontier Province Goondas Bill which aimed at penalising any person who publicly used foul, abusive or otherwise indecent languages likely to cause a breach of the peace between different sections of the public. Dr. Khan Sahib, the Premier, presented to the House the report of the Select Committee on the Bill and then moved for its consideration clause by clause. Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon till January 15, 1940. Mr. Khanna said that the conditions prevailing in the province did not warrant resort to a measure of such sweeping nature. Dewan Bhanjuran Gandhi, Finance Minister, agreed with the mover that the Bill was an extraordinary measure, but assured him that it would be used in only extraordinary and extreme cases. Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, Leader of the Opposition deplored that for ordinary times extraordinary measures were being resorted to. Opposing the circulation motion, Dr. Khan Sahib refuted the arguments that the Bill aimed at curbing the civil liberties of the people. The Bill, he said, would be applied only to those persons who indulged in abusive languages and created mischief by false propaganda. The motion was lost.

Earlier the House passed the N. W. F. P. Muslim Waqf Amendment Bill, the Opposition party declining to take part in the discussion.

#### HINDUS & SIKHS IN CONSTABULARY

**26th. SEPTEMBER :—**A non-official resolution recommending to the Provincial Government to approach the Central Government for giving adequate representation to the Hindus and Sikhs in the Frontier Constabulary and Khassadar forces was discussed to-day. Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna, the mover of the resolution, referred to the Bannu Inquiry Committee Report and said that the raids and kidnappings were assuming a communal turn and hence the question of granting adequate representation to the minorities was all the more necessary. Muslim members, both from the Congress and Muslim League benches, opposed the resolution while Hindu and Sikh members supported it. Dr. Khan Sahib, Premier, announced that the Provincial Government would shortly be communicating with the Government of India regarding the representation of Hindus and Sikhs in the centralised section of the Frontier Constabulary. Mr. Khanna, replying to the debate, observed that his resolution was of very great significance from the minorities' point of view and he refused to withdraw it. The resolution was put to the vote and lost by an overwhelming majority.

#### THE GOONDAS BILL (CONTD.)

**29th. to 28th. SEPTEMBER :—**After three day's discussion, the Assembly passed on the 28th September the N. W. F. P. Goondas Bill providing for the control of goondas residing in or frequenting the province, and their removal elsewhere, and for penalising persons using abusive and foul language in public. All opposition amendments, numbering 63, were either lost or withdrawn, save two of a minor nature which were accepted. A point of order was raised by Mr. Abdur Rab Nishtar (Independent) that the Bill was beyond the scope of a Provincial Legislature. He remarked that the object of the Bill was to empower the Provincial Government to expel a person from the province and regulate his movements even after his expulsion. This was *ultra vires* of a provincial legislature. He further observed that the Bill affected the British as well as non-British subjects and, taking into consideration the geographical conditions of the North-West Frontier Province, expulsion might be to a place in or outside India. He claimed that so far as

powers to legislate for expulsion outside India of those persons who were not British subjects was concerned, they had been vested in the Federal Legislature. The expulsion of British subjects from India, or from one unit to another unit in India was not provided anywhere. The *Speaker* ruled out the point, holding that following the example of the Defence of India Act, where similar powers had been mentioned under the heading "Public Order," the Bill fell within the purview of the phrase "Public order" mentioned in the Provincial List. *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Leader of the Muslim League Party, opposing the Bill, said that it would remain a blot on the fair name of the province. Some day, he hoped, the evil would be righted. *Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna*, Leader of the Hindu-Sikh Nationalist Party, opposed the principle of the Bill. *Mr. Pir Bakhs* (Independent) remarked that the Bill created a bad precedent, though nobody could be found to sympathise with goondas. *Mr. Abdur Rab Nishtar* (Independent) feared that the Act might be used ruthlessly by a "third party" in the country some day. Concluding the discussion, the *Premier* gave an assurance that the Act would be applied, without discrimination, to all persons who used foul and abusive language on a public stage. *Dr. Khan Sahib* proceeded to remark, "Some honourable members have mentioned that the clouds are reappearing and that there is a possibility of the replacement of this Government by an irresponsible government, who may use the Act ruthlessly against its sponsors. Let me assure all the honourable members that we are ready for all eventualities. Those who are out to free their country are never afraid to meet all possible dangers involved in the fulfilment of that noble task." The Assembly then adjourned *sine die*.

### Special Session—Peshawar—6th. & 7th. November, 1939

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

A special session of the Assembly commenced on the 6th November 1939 when the House discussed the resolution on the War crisis moved by the *Premier*, the hon. *Dr. Khan Sahib*. Speaking on the resolution the *Premier* stressed that it was of the utmost importance that they should maintain a united front in the struggle for securing freedom of India. "If the British people are asking the people of this country to make sacrifices in this war, the latter are entitled to be told of the cause for which the Britishers are fighting. If they want to have us as comrades in the battle against German aggression for securing the freedom of Poland, they must be prepared to remove from our minds the doubts and convince us that after the war, our comradeship will continue on absolutely equal terms and our freedom unconditionally and ungrudgingly be accorded." It would be a great sin, continued the *Premier*, for those who are the peoples' representatives to sit quiet and not demand a clear declaration from the British Government of their intention after the war. It was for the House to decide whether Sir Samuel Hoare's statement gave a correct interpretation of the conditions existing in India. *Gandhiji* extended the hand of friendship to Britain, but the latter had spurned it. The *Premier* said, "Our's is the weapon of non-violence with which we shall fight to the last. The result of violence is violence and bitterness and if exploitation and ignorance are set aside, there may be permanent peace in the world." Concluding, the *Premier* said that the speedy solution of the present vital problems required that quick agreement should be reached between the people of this country and England. That would be a hundred times more beneficial than an agreement painfully secured after long-drawn, irritating and pettifogging discussion.

*Mian Jaffer Shah* (Congress) moved an amendment to the resolution deleting the words "including arrangements whereby all war measures in this province may be undertaken with the consent of and executed through the Provincial Government" and adding the words, "and in view of the failure of the British Government to meet India's demand, this Assembly is of opinion that the Government cannot associate itself with the British policy."

*Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Leader of the Muslim League Party, moved the League amendment. He said that in moving the amendment, he was performing his duty towards non-Congress India. He traced the negotiations between the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah and attributed the failure of the talks to the non-compromising attitude of the Congress which, he said, had claimed to represent the whole of India. *Mr. Aurangzeb Khan* believed in a free India but not in an India dominated by Congress Imperialism, which was as poisonous

as British Imperialism. The Muslim League demanded a sense of security, justice and fairplay from the majority community and welcomed the British Government's declaration repudiating the Congress claim to represent the whole of India. He paid a tribute to the personality of Mr. Jinnah and condemned the Congress for not recognising the Muslim League as an authoritative representative body of Indian Muslims.

Rai Bahadur *Mehrchand Khanna* refuted the argument that the Muslims constituted a minority and said that their population in the world was 450 millions. He declared that the British Government had failed to make a correct estimate of the conditions prevailing in India and he urged the framing of a constitution for India by her own people.

The hon. Mr. *Bhanjaram Gandhi*, Finance Minister criticised Sir Samuel Hoare's statement that the King's Government would be carried on and declared that India's noble fight for freedom would be pursued with vigour and earnestness to the last man. Minority problems existed in every country and the present was not the occasion for the parties to fight among themselves. They should unite against the forces of British Imperialism. He appealed through Sardar Aurangzeb Khan to the Governments of Bengal and Punjab to resign at this juncture and make common cause with the Congress. Concluding, Mr. Gandhi said that the days of the aristocracy were over and challenged Mr. Aurangzeb Khan to form an alternative stable Ministry in the Frontier.

*Pir Baksh Khan*, Dr. C. C. Ghosh, Mr. *Abdul Rashid Khan*, Mr. *Kamdar Khan* and others took part in the debate. Discussion had not concluded when the House adjourned till the next day, the 7th November, when the representative character of the Muslim League to speak on behalf of the Muslim India was questioned by the Muslim Congress members. Emphatically repudiating the League's claim, *Qazi Attaulah Khan*, Education Minister, said that the Frontier Province which was inhabited by 94 per cent of Muslims was a Congress province and how could the Muslim League, constituted as it was of Knights, reactionaries, landlords and titleholders, represent the poor Muslims? He declared that the Congress was always ready to settle the communal questions with the Muslim League but the difficulty was that the Congress, which, as a non-communal organisation, could speak on behalf of the whole of India, was unable to recognise the representative character of the Muslim League.

Rai Bahadur *Iswar Das Sawhney* said that the failure of the British Government to declare her war aims showed the bankruptcy of British statesmanship. 'Why were not Indian political leaders consulted when India was involved in war?' he asked. The communal differences existed in every country, he added, but the situation in India had been greatly accentuated by forcing the communal award on India.

Mr. *Abdul Rab Khan Nishtar* criticised Mahatma Gandhi for his inconsistency regarding participation in the war as indicated in his statements issued from time to time. He opposed that part of the resolution which stated that in order to secure the co-operation of Indian people, the principles of democracy should be applied to India and its policy should be guided by her people. Freedom, he added, was their birthright and it was difficult to attain independence by arguments and statements. They must make sacrifices and create some conditions in India under which Britain will be compelled to part with the power.

Winding up the debate, the Premier, Dr. *Khan Sahib* characterised Muslim League amendment as lifeless and disappointing. He hoped it would be withdrawn. He appealed to the members that when they spoke from a public platform they should endeavour to educate those who were being exploited and deceived by interested persons. Addressing British statesmen, the Premier said, "We shall fight for you; we shall give you recruits for the freedom of Poland; but what will we get after the war? Not freedom but continuance of slavery, because somebody in India is not satisfied." "The question is not of life and death for our country," declared the Premier. "Let us unite at this juncture and set an example for the next generation. Let us be one nation, let us not be in league with those who want to keep us in bondage." He appealed to the members not to be misled by the hope of 'religion in danger' and unite for the common cause of the freedom of India. The Muslim League amendment was rejected without a division and the Premier's resolution was adopted in an amended form. A division was not challenged. The Assembly then adjourned *sine die*.

**Proceedings**  
  
**of**  
  
**The Congress Working Committee**  
  
**The All India Congress Committee**  
  
**and**  
  
**Other Political Conferences**

*July—December, 1939.*

# The Indian National Congress

Conference of the Secretaries

Bombay—27th. June 1939

A meeting of the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees was held in Congress House, Bombay, on the 27th. June 1939. Babu *Rajendra Prasad* presided.

He explained the object of the meeting. The A. I. C. C. having adopted far-reaching changes in the Congress Constitution the P. C. Cs had to make necessary adjustments in their own constitutions. These adjustments were to be effected at an early date and the changed constitutions submitted to the Working Committee for approval. For the smooth and effective working of the Congress machinery a number of suggestions were made. Sri *Rajendra Prasad* stressed the necessity of the Head Office being periodically informed of how things were going on in the provinces and the Congress machinery functioning. If not monthly at least quarterly reports must be submitted to the A. I. C. C. office. It would also help the provinces to receive periodical reports of enrolment of members and other matters from the districts. Under this arrangement the disputes will be settled as they arise instead of accumulating and then being disposed of hurriedly.

The new permanent constituencies should be formed immediately and not later when members are enrolled and thus cause given for suspicion.

The A. I. C. C. office received all manners of complaints calling for immediate redress. It is not possible to give redress unless facts are gone into and all sides heard. The Tribunals as envisaged in the new Constitution must be immediately brought into being to facilitate the settlement of election and other disputes. It was suggested that the A. I. C. C. office should send model rules for the election of tribunals.

Some suggestions were also made and adopted with regard to the office machinery. Office secretaries in towns and districts must be familiar with the office routine and have tolerable knowledge of the Constitution. They should also know some accounting.

An auditor is to be appointed for every province. The A. I. C. C. office will frame a system of accounts to be generally adopted in the provinces.

Towards the conclusion of the meeting, Shri J. B. Kripalani explained how 95 per cent of our quarrels would cease if secretaries and office bearers did not become party men when administering their duties as secretaries and office bearers. They should keep settling disputes.

He also explained how it was necessary for the provinces to have one or two inspectors who know accounts and keep constantly on the move.

No resolutions were passed.

## Circulars to the Provincial Congress Committees

The following Circulars were issued from time to time by *Acharya J. B. Kripalani*, the Congress Secretary, to the Provincial Congress Committees :—

*I—Allahabad—8rd. July 1939*

I draw your attention to the changes made in the Constitution in the A. I. C. C. meeting held in Bombay. As soon as the new Constitution embodying the changes is ready, copies shall be sent to you. This will take 2-3 days more. In the meantime as everything that was done in Bombay was published in the press you will commence your work in the light of the new rules made.

I also draw your attention to the various resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. in Bombay. You will please note that the Working Committee have fixed July 31st as the last date by which all the Tribunals in the provinces are to be formed. You will please send information of formation of Tribunals to this Office. You perhaps know that if the provinces fail to form the Tribunals by the end of this month the Working Committee will have to form such Tribunals for the province. I hope it will not be necessary for the Working Committee to intervene in this matter and even if there are parties it will be possible to form this judicial body unanimously or at least by the majority that is necessary for its formation.

I am sending you herewith for your information and guidance a copy of the time table made for the enrolment of primary members and for guiding the congress elections this year.



The new Constitution has made certain changes in the primary membership form. Even if the new forms are not ready, you will please see that the father's name or in the case of a married woman, the husband's name is recorded on the present form. You will also see that every form that is filled is attested by a witness.

### *II—Allahabad—3rd, July 1939*

It has come to my notice that subordinate Congress Committees have in various places passed resolutions calling in question the decision of the A. I. C. C. Several Committees have organised meetings to condemn its decisions arrived at by the only democratic method, that is by a majority vote. It must be realised that Congress Committees are under the jurisdiction of the A. I. C. C. They have to work under it and carry out its instructions. If subordinate organisations question the authority of the superior organisation under which they have to work and whose instructions they have to carry out, there will be no discipline left in our organisation. If we allow such indiscipline unchecked, we may despair of organising the country for any effective action against our opponents.

I, therefore, request all the Provincial Congress Committees to warn Congress Committees subordinate to them, against all such undesirable activities. Where warning proves ineffective action may be taken. It must however be understood that a request or suggestion can always be made to the A. I. C. C.

### *III—Allahabad—7th, July 1939*

The conference of the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees, which met at Bombay on June 28, 1939, decided, among other things, that a uniform system of accounts be adopted by all Provincial Congress Committees and their subordinate committees. At present our accounts in several Provincial Congress Committees, let alone their subordinate committees, are in a very unsatisfactory and disordered state. This is highly derogatory to the prestige of our great organisation. The All India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay adopted constitutional changes with a view to purge the Congress of irregularities and corruption that have of late crept in. The systematic keeping of accounts will be a step in the same direction. To this end we have prepared some notes with regard to the maintenance of accounts for your guidance. You will please issue instructions to your subordinate committees also on the lines suggested in these notes. I may further remind you of what I said at the Conference that for the better keeping of your accounts and those of your subordinate committees, it is necessary that you employ at least one whole time internal auditor for your province. This will diminish financial irregularities to a great extent.

We also suggest that our committees should carefully frame their budget and sanction expenditure. A small Accounts Sub-Committee may be formed for the purpose.

This Office will always be prepared to render what help it can in the matter of systematising the accounts of our Congress Committees.

## NOTES

The following are Notes for the guidance of Provincial and their Subordinate Congress Committees with regard to the maintenance of accounts issued from Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad on the 7th, July 1939 :—

### 1. General

#### (a) *Financial year :*

All Congress Committees must have a fixed financial year for purposes of accounting. The financial year of the A. I. C. C. is from 1st October to the 30th September and it is suggested that other committees should also fix their financial year accordingly. All the committees must, therefore, close their accounts for the current year on the 30th September, 1939 irrespective of the time of commencement of the year.

#### (b) *P. C. Cs and their subordinate committees :*

The Provincial offices should make arrangements for the supervision, inspection and audit of the accounts of the town, district and other congress committees under them. The subordinate committees should be instructed to forward their statements of receipts and payments and a copy of their Trial Balance to the Provincial

Congress Committees every quarter of the year. The provincial office should publish annual statement showing the total receipt and expenditure of Congress funds throughout the whole province in a consolidated form compiled from the statements received from the town and district congress committees and the statement of the Provincial Congress itself. The A. I. C. C. office will similarly, with the help of the periodical statements received from the P. C. Cs, issue annual statements embodying the Provincial accounts along with the All India Congress Committee accounts. Instructions should be issued by the P. C. Cs to all their subordinate congress committees on the lines suggested in these notes and the inspectors appointed by the Provincial Congress Committees are to see that the accounts are properly kept and the instructions from the central office are carried out properly. The inspectors should also explain to them the approved methods of accounting, namely the double entry system and try that the system is adopted. In any case the P. C. Cs must see that a uniform system of accounting is followed by all their subordinate committees.

## 2. Control of Accounts

### (a) Budget :

The expenditure is to be regulated by the preparation of periodical budgets sanctioned and approved by the local or provincial committee at the case may be. The budget should be prepared by the treasurer or the secretary in the beginning of the year and should contain the probable income and expenditure for the year calculated on the basis of 3 or 4 years' average. Sanction must be obtained for the expenditure not budgeted for and for items not covered under the usual activities of the Committee. The Congress Committee should on the basis of this budget authorise the secretary or the president to make payments upto the sum provided under different heads. For the sake of convenience a small amount not exceeding ten per cent of the total budget may be provided under sundries. The president, or the secretary with the approval of the president may be allowed to spend from this amount at his discretion in case of emergency subject to the sanction of the committee in the following meeting.

### (b) Sanctioning Authority :

There should be only one sanctioning authority namely the Secretary through whom all vouchers must pass. No payments are to be made without such sanction. All demands for payments should be supported by duly authorised order or properly drawn up bills and vouchers should bear the signature of the Secretary.

### (c) Banking of Money :

The committee must appoint a banker with whom the money may be deposited. All receipts should invariably be sent to bank and money required for expenditure must be drawn separately. In no case the receipts are to be used for expenses.

### (d) Cash Balance :

Amount of permanent advance and cash balance to be kept with the secretary and the cashier for day to day expenses should be fixed by the committee and the secretary and the cashier should keep only such amounts as cash balance. If additional cash balance has to be kept permission of the president should be obtained in the matter.

### (e) Receipts and vouchers :

Receipts and vouchers are to be properly maintained and serially numbered. All receipt forms shall be bound in counterfoil books. Each book shall contain a fixed number of those running consecutively. Second set of receipt books should not ordinarily be used, unless first is exhausted. No amounts are to be received without giving a receipt.

Vouchers must be taken for all payments and no payment is to be made without the corresponding receipt of the recipient. The committee should have printed forms of receipts and vouchers. Vouchers must be serially numbered and filed in voucher files.

### (f) Periodical Returns :

All the Provincial Congress Committees must invariably send to the A. I. C. C. office copies of their Trial Balance and statement of receipts and payments

every quarter of the year. Also at the close of the year they must supply the A. I. C. C. with a copy of their annual balance sheet.

The Trial Balance is usually prepared on loose sheets ruled in a form similar to that of the journal (see form 'C' enclosed) with debit and credit money columns side by side. Each account is given a line and the name of the account is written in the particular column. The first money column is used for entering the total of the debit side of each Ledger Account and second column for the total of credit side of the Account. If the books are correctly written the debit total will equal the credit total.

### 3. Books and Registers

#### (a) *Cash Book :*

All receipts and payments are to be entered in the cash book. It is to be checked with the cash in hand. As a rule all payments over Rs. 20 are to be made as far as possible by cheques (see form 'A' enclosed).

#### (b) *Petty Cash Book or Columnar Cash Book :*

The frequently occurring items of expenditure, if they are many, are to be entered in this book. This helps in doing away with the necessity of opening separate ledger accounts for every item. This cash book, therefore, serves two purposes—recording the expenditure and classifying it under various heads which may be totalled at the end of the month. This book is to be used only if there are a large number of petty expenses occurring frequently. The Subordinate Committees are not to use this book at all. (See form 'B' enclosed).

#### (c) *Journal :*

Sometimes Transfer Entries or entries for rectification of errors have to be passed. These entries must be passed through journal. In order to make the journal entries self-explanatory it is essential that a concise explanation giving the reasons for the entry should be appended to every entry. This narration in a journal entry is as important as the figures comprising it. (See form 'C' enclosed).

#### (d) *Ledger :*

All entries of the cash book are to be posted in the Ledger which will show an account of receipts and expenditure and the amount spent under each. The transferring of the entries from the cash book and Journal into the ledger is called 'posting'. This book is useful for the preparation of Trial Balance and Final Accounts. (See form 'D' enclosed).

#### (e) *Salary Register :*

It is essential to maintain a separate Salary Register. This register should contain the name, designation and other particulars. (See form 'E' enclosed).

#### (f) *Postage Register :*

This register should contain a detailed account of postage stamps spent. It is necessary to maintain an Imprest System of postage account. Advances should be made to the postage clerk from time to time and the amount thus advanced should be debited to Postage Imprest account in the Cash Book. While making advances it is essential to see that the previous advance has been properly accounted for. At the close of the month the balance of postage is to be returned back to the cashier and should be credited to Postage Imprest account. The total amount spent on postage during the month is to be debited to Postage account and the corresponding credit is to be given to the Postage Imprest account. In this way at the close of the month the Postage Imprest account will close and the postage account will be debited with the actual amount spent on postage stamps. (See form 'F' enclosed).

#### (g) *Dead Stock and Furniture Register :*

It is essential to maintain a separate account in the Ledger for Dead Stock and furniture. All monies spent on furniture or other lasting and valuable stock should be debited to this account. This account will form a part of the Assets of the Committee and is not to be treated as a revenue item. The furniture register should contain the details of furniture and all other details as to the date of purchase and price etc. of the article.

The Committee should make provision for allowing annual depreciation on this account.

Besides the above some other registers may be necessary for instance a register showing the number of receipt books printed and their description. This may also include the record of membership copies printed as well as any special receipts book for donation, subscription, etc.

An issue register giving the names of persons to whom the receipts of membership books are issued for collection of funds or enrolment of members should also be kept. The name, address and signature of the person receiving should be clearly put. The forms of these registers including convenient heads may be prepared by the Committee.

#### IV—Allahabad—5th. July 1939

While sending you copies of the new Constitution, I would like to explain as best as I can some of the important changes incorporated. It will not be out of place if I remind you that the revision of the constitution was taken in hand to tackle with the growing irregularities in our organisation which have weakened it for effective action. However perfect a constitution may be it can only be an external and mechanical aid to stop corruption. Much must depend upon the character of those working it or working under it. Yet if external and mechanical rules are followed meticulously and in the spirit in which they are made some irregularities from which our organisation has suffered in the past may progressively diminish. We may not forget that our aim of national emancipation for the sake of the lowly and poor of India is high; our means for accomplishing our purpose is noble. It is therefore more than ever incumbent upon us to work in a spirit of selfless service which has made for the greatness of the Congress and the unique position it occupies today inside and outside India. There need be no scramble for power in the ranks of those whose only rewards in the not very distant past, were lathi blows, jail walls and prisoner's humiliation. Yet life seemed to be worth living more then than today, when we look powerful and our word seems to prevail. One wonders why there should be competition for positions in a land where the soil in every social, economic, political and philanthropic field is so refreshingly maiden. Truly the crop is plentiful but the labourers are few. May I therefore humbly request that the new Constitution be worked in the spirit which befits our high purpose.

In the first three articles there are no changes or only verbal and slight changes here and there.

Art. IV-a contemplates renewal of membership. This renewal is to be made next year as in form 'B'. This year the primary members have to fill in and sign form 'A'. The only additions to the form are that there should be the father's name or in the case of a married woman the husband's name and the form is to be attested by a witness. If no other witness is available the form may be attested by the person enrolling members. But the attestation must preferably be of some other neighbour.

Art. V. The permanent roll shall be maintained in the District Congress Committee office. This must be considered as authoritative for any reference. Subordinate committees to District Congress Committees may have their own rolls for their own use but such rolls cannot have the authority that the permanent district roll has in which shall be recorded the fact of renewal of application every year.

Art. VII-a. No member can vote at any election unless he has been continuously on the register for 12 months prior to the date of election. Previously the period was limited to three months. It must be noted that this rule does not apply this year. The old rule of three months applies this year.

But an exception is made in the case of primary Congress Committees that are newly made. Their executives, if any, may be elected by primary members who have a continued membership for three months. Where there are old primary committees functioning the rule of 12 months must apply from the next year.

Art. VII-b lays down as usual for members of executive and elected committees the condition of habitual wear of khadi.

A habitual wearer of khadi is one, as was affirmed in the last meeting of the Working Committee at Bombay, who satisfies the test laid down in the following ruling given by the Ex-President, Shri Vallabhbhai Patel and confirmed by the Working Committee at its meeting at Patna in December, 1934, combined with the rule made by the Working Committee in April, 1935. The two are given below :

*Shri Vallabhbhai Patel's ruling :*

On a reference being made as to the definition of the term "habitual wearer wholly of handspun and handwoven khaddar" in Art. V Clause (b) (i) the Working Committee was of opinion that the definition given in the following terms by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel represented their views :

1. When a man wears clothes made of khadi as a matter of habit, he is a habitual wearer. If, therefore, for any just cause he cannot use khadi on some occasion, he does not cease to be habitual wearer.

2. But if a person appears at Congress function in clothes not made of khadi, he will be presumed not to be habitual wearer of khadi.

3. Habitual wearer of clothes made of khadi means all clothes from top to toe made of handspun and handwoven khadi.

4. When it is pointed out to the Chair or when the Chairman of a Congress meeting himself knows that a voter or candidate is not wearing khadi clothes at that meeting, he is bound to rule that the person is not a habitual wearer inspite of his protestations to the contrary.

*Working Committee rule of 1935 (Jubbulpore Resolution) :*

"With reference to the enquiries made, the Working Committee instructs the Provincial Congress Committees to treat a person as habitual wearer of khaddar who has shown himself as having worn khaddar for a period of six months prior to his election to office or as a member of the Congress Committee.

It was also decided by the last meeting of the Working Committee at Bombay that "the khadi clause apply to all those who were granted Congress ticket in municipal and local boards and other elections even as it applies to members of legislatures."

Art. VII-c lays down a further condition for being elected a delegate or a member of the Provincial Congress Committee or the District Congress Committee. Nobody can be a candidate for these three positions unless he has been continuously on the register of three consecutive years. The current year must be counted in the 3 years. Exemption from this clause can be granted to individuals and not to classes for the two years 1939 and 1940 only by the Executives of the P. C. Cs.

Art. VII-d. Only two organisations namely the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League have been named so far by the Working Committee as communal organisations for the purpose of this clause.

*Art. VIII. Election of Tribunals.*

The election must preferably be unanimous by the executive of the P. C. C. and not by the P. C. C. In case unanimity is not possible the tribunal must be elected by a three-fourth majority of all the members of the executive and not merely of those present.

The district Tribunals have to be appointed not by district authorities but by the Provincial Tribunal itself. If P. C. Cs fail to discharge their duty the Working Committee is empowered to do this for them. It is however to be hoped that there will be no party consideration in the appointment of Provincial Tribunal which are our judiciary. They must be appointed with the trust and goodwill of all sections.

Art. IX. It must be noted that the register of primary members shall be kept open for inspection only for a week namely from September 18th to September 23. No objections taken after that date shall be valid. The register, after due corrections, if any, shall be ready by the 10th October after which no name can be added to it or subtracted from it except for any disciplinary action taken by proper authorities.

Art. X. *Election of Delegates* : This in Bombay was discussed as the most controversial article and one which was not easily understood. There it was mentioned as Article XI. On carefully renumbering, it is found to be Art. X. The President had declared that the articles will be renumbered carefully later and had the permission of the House for doing so.

The distribution between rural and urban members is retained only for purposes of record. This can be easily done. Every primary member who is enrolled in the town or city having a population of 10,000 or more is to be classed as an urban primary member.

The rest are all rural members.

The maximum number of delegates that each province is entitled to is the

same. It is calculated on the same basis—one for a lac of population of the province and the Indian States attached to it in accordance with the census of 1931. So far there is no change.

Art. X-c. The first change is that of fixed constituencies. These have not to change every year as heretofore. They may be readjusted after long periods when there is any considerable shifting of population.

Art. X-g. The other change is that delegates shall be assigned each administrative district on population basis—one for every lac of population, provided for every delegate assigned there are not less than 500 primary members enrolled during the year. For example, if there is a single member constituency which has a lac of population but has not made 500 primary members during the year it gets disfranchised and loses the right of electing a delegate. Such a lost delegate cannot be reassigned by the province to another constituency.

Art. X-g II. This caused in Bombay perhaps the most confusion. However it is not as confusing as it looks. In many congress provinces there are no congress offices in the Indian States. Portions of states are to be assigned to other portions in administrative provinces. This may continue and there will be no difficulty in assigning number of delegates. The population of any area in the Indian state will be added to the population of the district to which it is attached and the number of district delegates will proportionately increase.

In some Indian states there are Congress Committees functioning in the states area. Such areas may be divided into constituencies. Even then it may not be possible to have all the delegates in accordance with the rule of 500 primary members enrolled in the year in the area. If a delegate's seat is lost in the Indian states it is not altogether lost to the province. It must be added to the province and rules for such addition must be made by the P. C. C. beforehand.

Art. XI. *Election disputes* :

Art. XI-b. Every election is valid and the member elected can function till his election is set aside by the Tribunal.

Art. XI-c. Only in election disputes the decision, on appeal, of the Provincial Tribunal is final. The objections to the election cannot be raised after the expiry of 7 days after the election.

Art. XI-c. When a provincial tribunal awards any punishment or takes any disciplinary action for any misconduct in connexion with enrolment of members, maintenance of register of members, election or lodging of a false objection or complaint knowing it to be false, an appeal shall lie in such cases to the Working Committee.

### NOTES—1. On Rajkot

We round off, in this issue of our bulletin, the story of Rajkot. In the last issue we recorded how after finding his efforts to conciliate the State authorities ineffective Gandhiji allowed Darbar Virawalla to pursue his ways and placate the people. He then left Rajkot for Calcutta in connection with the A. I. C. C. meeting. While there he received disquieting reports from the Rajkot Parishad. Much as he would have preferred to leave matters where he left them, when proceeding to Calcutta, he could not remain unaffected by the urgent messages from the Parishad calling him back. He therefore proceeded back to Rajkot as soon as he was free.

On reaching Rajkot he discussed with all concerned the new scheme of Reforms that Darbar Virawalla and the so-called 'moderate group' had evolved among themselves. He followed a double policy, on the one hand of wooing Shri Virawalla and through him the Thakore Sahib and, on the other, pursuing the remaining stages arising out of Sir Gwyer's award. It was however soon discovered that there was no proper and suitable atmosphere for the pursuit of either policy. The scheme of reforms drafted by Darbar Virawalla and the moderate group fell far short of the minimum requirements of the situation and the strenuous efforts of Gandhiji to have the scheme suitably modified did not meet with success. As the only alternative left, he could proceed with Sir Gwyer's award and insist on its fulfilment; but here too, he was up against a number of difficulties, psychological and otherwise. The Gwyer award was a disagreeable imposition on Shri Virawalla who set himself to leave no device untried for escaping its consequences. This created for Gandhiji a very delicate situation. Neither was a settlement independent of Sir Maurice's award maturing nor was the atmosphere helpful for the implementing of the Gwyer's award. Gandhiji would have proceeded

resolutely with the award but for the slowly deepening doubt in his mind that the award suffered from a moral flaw. This doubt was a call for intense self-introspection. He called the Parishad workers and laid bare before them the agonising state of his mind. On May 17, he issued a remarkable statement wherein he announced his renunciation of Sir Gwyer's award and recognised his error in seeking external aid during his Rajkot fast when he should have relied exclusively on the goodwill of Darbar Virawalla and Thakore Sahib. The relevant portions of the statement he made on the occasion are given below :

"When I left for Calcutta on the 24th ultimo I said that Rajkot had proved a laboratory for me. The latest proof of the fact lies in the step I am now announcing. After exhaustive discussion with my co-workers, I came to the conclusion at 6 p.m. this evening that I should renounce the award of the Chief Justice.

"I recognise my error. At the end of my fast, I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done. I now see that it was tainted with Himsa. In taking the fast I sought 'immediate intervention of the Paramount Power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Sahib'. This was not the way of Ahimsa or conversion. It was the way of Himsa or coercion. My fast to be pure should have been addressed only to the Thakore Sahib and I should have been content to die if it could not have melted his heart or rather that of his adviser Durbar Shree Virawalla.

"My eyes would not have been opened, if I had not found unexpected difficulties in my way. Darbar Virawalla was no willing party to the award. Naturally he was in no obliging mood. He, therefore, took advantage of every opportunity to cause a delay. The award instead of making my way smooth, became a potent cause of angering the Muslim and Bhayats against me. Before the award, we had met as friends. Now I am accused of having committed a breach of promise voluntarily and without any consideration made by me. The matter was to go to the Chief Justice to decide whether I was guilty of alleged breach of promise. The statements of Muslim Council and Girasia Associations are before me. Now that I have taken the decision to renounce the award, there is no occasion for me to answer the two cases. So far as I am concerned, the Muslims and Bhayats can have anything the Thakore Sahib may be pleased to give them. I must apologise to them for having put them to trouble of preparing their cases. I owe an apology to Viceroy for the unnecessary strain I have put upon him in my weakness. I apologise to Chief Justice for having been the cause of putting him to the labour, had I known better, he need not have gone through. Above all, I apologise to the Thakore Sahib and Durbar Virawalla.

"I must not do an injustice to my co-workers. Many of them are filled with misgivings. My exposition of Ahimsa is new to them. They see no cause for my repentance. They think that I am giving up a great chance created by the Award. They think too that as a political leader I have no right to play fast and loose with the fortunes of 75,000 souls, may be of the whole of the people of Kathiawar.

"I have told them that their fears are unjustified and that every act of purification, every accession of courage, adds to the strength of the cause of the people affected by a movement of Satyagraha. I have told them too that if they regard me as the general and expert of Satyagraha they must put up with what may appear to them to be my vagaries.

"Having now freed the Thakore Sahib and his advisor from the oppression of the award, I have no hesitation in appealing to them to appease the people of Rajkot by fulfilling their expectations and dispelling their misgivings."

With Gandhiji renouncing the fruits of Sir Gwyer's award, the situation in Rajkot underwent a slight change. The State authorities responded by withdrawing repressive legislation and announcing a Reform Committee. The Parishad however choose to keep out of the Committee though it decided to lead evidence.

The end of the tragic episode is not yet in sight.

## 2. On Digboi Strike

The strike of workers at Digboi has attracted widespread attention in the country. It has gone on since April 5 last, and the workers are still holding out bravely despite manifold hardships. The Working Committee at its meetings in Bombay gave earnest consideration to the issues involved in the strike and exchanged telegrams with parties concerned with a view to explore possibilities of bringing about a settlement of the dispute. The employers, however, proved adamant. They neither agreed to accept the minimum demands of labour nor refer the dispute

to arbitration. When these friendly approaches of the Working Committee failed they adopted a resolution for the A. I. C. O. which was unanimously passed by that body.

To have an idea of the genesis of the strike, and how it spread and developed and the efforts that were made by the Congress President and others for effecting a satisfactory settlement of the strike the following comprehensive statement of Babu Rajendra prasad will prove helpful :—

"The strike of workers at Digboi has gone on since April 3 last. An effort was made by me to bring about an amicable settlement but it has failed for the time being. It is necessary to place before the public the facts and circumstances relating to the strike that came to my notice during the conversations I had with the representatives of the parties.

"Digboi is situated in Assam, where the Assam Oil Company has its oil fields and refining plant at Digboi and an installation with a plant for making cans and tins at Tinsukia. The Oil Company employs about 6,000 men directly and some 4,000 men work for it under contractors. Workers are drawn from many distant parts of the country. There was no Union till about the end of 1937 when a Union known as the Assam Oil Company Labour Union was established. Soon after its establishment the Union asked for its recognition by the Company. The Company, in its turn, wanted to be satisfied as to the number of workers who had joined the Union, its rules and regulations and whether its office bearers had been duly elected before it could consider the question of recognition. Discussion through correspondence and perhaps occasionally at meetings of representatives of both parties went on for some time. In the meantime, the Union drew up a statement of demands on behalf of the workers for improving the conditions of service and for recognition of the Union. These demands were formally placed before the Company and discussions followed. The Company asked the Government to intervene and to appoint a Court of Enquiry to investigate the dispute under the Indian Trade Disputes Act. The workers also having expressed their consent, the Government appointed a Court of Enquiry consisting of Mr. Higgins, Commissioner of Assam Valley Division as Chairman and Khan Bahadur Syedur Rahaman, M. L. A., and S. J. Omeekumar Das, M. L. A., as members of the Court. The demands put forward on behalf of the Union and the reply thereto by the Company formed as it were the point of dispute for investigation. It was hoped that the result of the Enquiry by the Court would be a settlement of the dispute and establishment of calm in the industry. It was also expected that during the inquiry and while the matter was under discussion and negotiation '*status quo*' would be maintained.

It is not necessary, at this stage, to go into the details of the investigation and the course the inquiry took. A stage was however reached when the Union refused to lead any further evidence and the Court had thereafter to base its conclusions on such evidence as had been recorded after hearing arguments on both sides. The reason for this action on the part of the Union is said to be the dismissal or discharge of a person, Mahomed Ismail, who was a Bungalow servant on the alleged ground of his having given evidence against the Company. It is a matter of contention between the parties whether a Bungalow servant is an employee of the Company or a domestic servant of the officers to whom he is attached. The Enquiry commenced on 29th August, 1938 and ended on 29th October, 1938. The report was submitted on 7th January, 1939 and the Government resolution on it was published on 9th February, 1939 and the report itself was published some days later. During this period and while discussions were going on between the Company and the Union regarding the effect to be given to the recommendations of the Court of Enquiry some workers numbering 63 in all were discharged in several batches as follows :

"Seven men on 14th November, 6 men on 14th November, 11 men on 9th December, 5 men on 30th December, 6 men on 16th February, 8 men on 2nd March, 5 men on 31 March, and 8 men on 1st April.

"The Company claims that these were surplus hands no longer needed and although the Company had been contemplating removing them for some months before, it did not do so earlier only to maintain an atmosphere of calm during the Enquiry and that when it did discharge them it did so in small batches and that it paid them one month's wages in lieu of notice and railway fare for themselves and their families to their native villages. On the side of the Union it is claimed that there had been a distinct understanding that the '*status quo*' would not be



disturbed during the investigations and negotiation and the Company was not justified in removing these men.

"On the discharge of each batch the union sent strongly worded protests and indicating that the Union's hands might be forced by such action on the part of the Company and its offensive would be met by counter offensive meaning direct action by way of strike. The Company paid no heed to the protests and went on discharging batch after batch. Some points were settled at one stage whereby some of the men of Tinsukia works were promised reabsorption as temporary hands at Digboi as vacancies occurred but before anything could be done another batch was dismissed and the Union decided to go on strike. The discussions regarding the effort to be given to the recommendations had gone on and the Company had agreed to act up to most of the major recommendations of the Court, refused to accept some and promised to consider some others. It had also accepted some of the recommendations by the majority of the Court and promised consideration of others. It appears that in spite of the differences regarding some of the recommendations and discussions relating to them had gone on smoothly and it may be said that an agreed settlement was possible, if not likely.

"It is therefore all the more unfortunate that all the labours of the Court of Enquiry and the fruits of subsequent discussions were jeopardised by an action on a side issue viz., the discharge of some 63 workers. It is claimed by the Company that the employer is the best, if not the only judge, of the number of men he required and his discretion to discharge hands could not be interfered with and the Company could not be expected to continue employing men whose services were no longer required. On the other hand the Union claims that all reduction in staff should be arrived at as a result of mutual discussion between the Company and the Union and that in any case in a big establishment where 10,000 men were employed there was no occasion for this hasty action in discharging some 63 men in small batches of 10 or 12 while the whole question of relation between the Union and the Company and the terms of employment including the question of security of service was under investigation and negotiation, that the Company should not have persisted in its course after it had received protests from the workers and when it had notice that persistence in the course was likely to result in a strike. Each party throws the blame on the other.

"The Company says that a strike was coming as it is not an economic strike but a political one and the Union was just on the look out for a pretext which it found in the discharge of some surplus hands which happens ordinarily in normal course of business. On the other hand it is said that the workers insisted on security of service and on the right that reduction should ordinarily be made only after discussion and that the Company acted without justification and in haste while negotiations were going on and they had no option but to resort to strike when their representations proved ineffective. The result has been a complete strike in which almost every worker whether working directly under the Company or under a contractor participated. In this way it was a remarkable strike and it is difficult to understand how such a complete strike could be brought about without some substantial grievance which was felt by the workers to be of importance enough to justify recourse to a strike. It may also be stated that the strike was originally announced to be a protest strike for a week only but during the week developments in the shape of announcements that no strikers whose services were no longer required could be re-employed took place which made it a strike for an indefinite period. In the course of the strike the Company has employed new hands. One of the demands of the strikers from the beginning had been the re-employment of the 63 discharged men. The Company has made it clear that it would not employ any discharged hands as they were not required and also that out of the strikers only as many would be taken back as were needed. There has thus been a deadlock and the strike continues.

"At one time there was firing in which three persons were killed and some injured. It is not necessary for me to go into this matter at this stage beyond stating that it has added to the exasperation of workers and made the Government open to attack.

"When I was approached to intervene I and Acharya Kripalani and Dr. Prafulla Ghosh had at first discussions with the Prime Minister, representatives of the Union, Messrs. Lagden and Moore. Mr. Lagden communicated the discussions to the management and Mr. Langeman, the General Manager of the Company expressed a desire to have a discussion with me. I paid a second visit to Calcutta,

and met Mr. Lingeman with whom I had a talk. Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and the Prime Minister of Assam and the Hon'ble Mr. Fakhrauddin Ahmad also participated in the discussion on the second occasion. The minimum demand of the Union as against the Company was as follows :

(1) All strikers to be taken back.

(2) Workers dismissed during the pendency of the dispute to be reinstated.

(3) All outstanding points of dispute to be referred to and finally settled by a Board of Conciliation or Arbitration to be appointed by the Government.

"On the other hand, Mr. Lingeman communicated to us his terms which were as follows :—

"Firstly, men previously staff-reduced cannot be reinstated, solely because numbers were in excess of requirements for work available.

"Secondly, no joint control of numbers employed.

"Thirdly, cannot take back men displaced by the engagements, but willing to examine how much work hitherto done by contractors can be suitably done by Company in future thus providing employment for some of such men, though this will not constitute additional employment in Digboi as a whole.

"Fourthly, if Government will arrange through a Government officer to repatriate strikers left unemployed, Company will offer as gratis act recognising no obligation and creating no precedent, to reimburse cost of fares for men and families.

"Fifthly, we stand by all undertakings given to Union with regard to terms and conditions of employment before negotiations broke off. In addition to above conditions it should be understood that we adhere to undertaking to constitute labour council without delay, and in order to guarantee freedom from influence either by Company or non-employees, would suggest Magistrate should supervise election of representatives from each Department.

"After the conversation with Mr. Lingeman we became confirmed in the view that there was no meeting ground. We still decided to wait and see if it was possible to end the strike by securing the re-employment of all the men on strike and getting a guarantee that there would be no victimisation. Mr. Lingeman gave us to understand that about 350 of the old workers of the Company had returned to work ; he had employed twelve to thirteen hundred new hands and about four hundred men working under contractors had also joined work. He said he was pledged not to discharge any of the 1,200 or 1,300 new hands he had employed during the strike and the utmost he could do was to get rid of some of the contractors who were employing about 500 men so displaced newly employed hands on some jobs which used to be done by contractors but which would now be done departmentally by the Company. This would mean not re-employing 500 of the contractors' workers and the number of strikers not re-employed as a result of the strike would remain the same—say 1,200 or 1,300. It is a common experience of all strikers that the employer tries to recruit new labour and when a settlement is reached the strikers insist that there should be no victimisation and the old hands are re-employed if not immediately within a short time after the settlement.

"At Digboi the strike was started on account of the discharge of some 63 workers and the minimum demand was reinstatement of those 63 hands. The Company refuses not only to reinstate those 63 men but also to take back some 1,200 or 1,300 of its workers who have gone on strike. There is nothing extraordinary if the Union cannot agree to call of the strike on such terms. On the face of it this cannot be the term of a settlement although it is possible that if the strike falls worse may happen to the workers. The workers are face to face with a strong and resourceful company and it is possible that their capacity to hold out may not prove stronger than that of the Company but that is not the same thing as agreeing to terms which place the workers in a position no better than that in which they would be if the strike failed altogether. When I was invited to pay a visit to Calcutta, a second time I had hoped that it would be possible to find a way out and I did not expect that the Company would simply restate the terms which it had communicated to the Prime Minister before my first meeting with him and had been known to me and known to the Prime Minister as unacceptable to workers. It seems to me that there is at present no chance of a settlement and the workers have to fight out to the best of their ability. The Working Committee is going to meet on the 21st, June 1939 and I shall place the whole case before it for such action as it may consider necessary in the circumstances."

### 3. On the Political Prisoners' Day

Sunday, May 21 was observed as the Political Prisoners' Day throughout the country in response to the President's appeal. Meetings were held in parts of the country and speeches made urging the release of political prisoners especially in Bengal and the Punjab. Rastrapati Babu Rajendra Prasad issued the following statement to the press in connection with the Day:—

"During the last two years or so a large number of political prisoners who had been detained in prisons with or without trial have been released. But there is still a partly large number in jails, principally in Bengal and also in the Punjab. Mahatma Gandhi interested himself on behalf of the prisoner- and detenus of Bengal when they declared that they had no faith in terroristic methods and he was successful in securing the release of prisoners and also of a certain number of persons convicted in Bengal. He carried on negotiation for a pretty long time regarding others, who were not released, but ultimately the negotiations failed, and although now and then prisoners are released there is a large number still in jails in Bengal and also a smaller number in the Punjab.

After the prisoners declared that they had no faith in terrorism it would have been in the fitness of things to let them off. Those that have been released have not been shown to be participating in any terroristic activities and they have shown by their conduct that their declaration is genuine and true. But for some reason or other, Government are not prepared to yield to the popular wish that the prisoners should also be treated in the same way as others who have been released. It need hardly be stated that there has been a universal feeling in favour of these prisoners throughout the country and the All India Congress Committee in Calcutta gave expression to the universal feeling when it passed a resolution to the effect that a countrywide agitation should be observed to give pointed expression to the feeling. In accordance with the resolution of the All India Congress Committee, I fix that Sunday, May 21, be observed as the Political Prisoners' Day.

Meetings should be held on this day and suitable resolutions on the subject should be passed at such meetings. I hope and trust the day will be observed in a fitting manner all over the country."

### 4. On National Planning Committee

In a previous issue of the bulletin we have recorded, in brief, the proceedings of the first meeting of the National Planning Committee which took place in December last. It drafted an elaborate questionnaire which was sent to various Governments, public bodies, Chambers of Commerce, trade unions and individuals.

The second meeting of the Committee took place in Bombay from 4 to 17 June. The Chairman of the Committee, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, explained, once again, the nature and scope of National Planning and its objectives: "We have to draw up" he observed, "a full plan which would apply to a free India and at the same time indicate what should be done now, and under present conditions, in the various departments of national activity."

"The ideal of the Congress is the establishment of a free and democratic State in India. Such a full democratic State involves an equalitarian society, in which equal opportunities are provided for every member for self-expression and self-fulfilment, and an adequate minimum of a civilised standard of life is assured to each member so as to make the attainment of this equal opportunity a reality. This should be the back-ground or foundation of our Plan."

The Congress, has, in view of present conditions in India, laid great stress on the encouragement of cottage industries. Any planning must therefore take note of this fact and base itself on it. This does not necessarily mean a conflict between cottage industries and large-scale industries. A large number of essential industries, which are necessary for the independence and well-being of the country, must inevitably be on a large scale. The very resolution appointing the Planning Committee calls upon us to provide for the development of heavy key industries, medium scale industries and cottage industries. It lays down that the economic regeneration of the country cannot take place without industrialisation. We have thus to expedite this industrialisation and to indicate how and where key and basic industries are to be started. We have to demarcate, in so far as is possible, the domains of large-scale and cottage industries, and where the latter have been especially favoured by the national movement, to give them every protection and encouragement.

"The Congress has laid down in its Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights that the State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, water-ways, shipping and other means of public transport. This general indication of Congress policy is of vital importance and applies not only to public utilities but to large-scale industries and enterprises which are likely to be monopolistic in character. A legitimate extension of this principle would be to apply it to all large-scale enterprises. It is clear that our Plan must proceed on this basis and even if the State does not own such enterprises, it must regulate and control them in the public interest."

As originally conceived, the Planning Committee was supposed to do a certain amount of preliminary work as preparatory to more comprehensive investigations by the larger body—a National Planning Commission. But as it proceeded it found that it had to do its work more thoroughly and on a more comprehensive basis. After considering the large number of answers it had received to its questionnaire it proceeded to appoint a large number of sub-committees to consider each individual problem, and each sector of the national plan, separately. For the present it has set up 27 sub-committees divided under seven main heads, namely: (1) Agriculture, (2) Industries, (3) Demographic relations, (4) Commerce and finance, (5) Transport and Communication, (6) Public welfare and (7) Education.

Experts have been invited to serve on these committees. The Committee adopted certain instructions for the guidance of the various sub-committees.

"The principal objective of planning the national economy should be" it laid down "to attain, as far as possible, national self-sufficiency and not primarily for purpose of foreign markets. This does not exclude international trade, which should be encouraged, but with a view to avoid economic imperialism. The first charge on the country's produce, agricultural and industrial, should be to meet the domestic needs of food supply, raw materials and manufactured goods. But outlets for surplus goods may be explored to meet the requirements of India's international indebtedness.

"The fundamental aim to be kept in view is to ensure an adequate standard of living for the masses. An adequate standard of living implies a certain irreducible minimum plus a progressive scale of comforts and amenities. Estimates of economists in different parts of India put down this irreducible minimum at figures varying from Rs. 15 to 25 per capita per month in the present value of the rupee. The expression in terms of money is only used for the sake of convenience, the real measure being in terms of goods and services. An approximate estimate puts the average annual income per capita at Rs. 65. This includes the rich and poor, the town-dweller and the villager. The average of the villager is estimated to be somewhere between Rs. 25 and Rs. 30 per annum per capita. This implies not only a considerable deficit in food supply but also in the other essential requirement of human existence. The national income must therefore be increased greatly during the next ten years to ensure an irreducible minimum standard for everybody. In order to secure this minimum standard not only will it be necessary to increase production but also to bring about a more equitable distribution to wealth.

"A really progressive standard of life will necessitate the increase of the national wealth five or six times. But for the present the minimum standard which can and should be reached is an increase of national wealth of between two and three times within the next ten years. It is with this object in view that we should plan now."

The Planning Committee has, in its strenuous labours, received a large measure of operation from all manner of people and organisations. With the single exception of Bengal, all the provincial governments are co-operating with the Committee. The Committee has also received the active co-operation of important States like Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Bhopal, Travancore and Cochin. More may join in the near future. The Committee has a well-staffed secretariat. Prof. K. T. Shah has been appointed as honorary General Secretary. A sum of Rs. 50,000 has been sanctioned for the Committee's expenses.

Babu Rajendra Prasad received from Shri K. O. Kumarappa, the secretary of A. I. V. I. A. and a member of the Planning Committee a letter asking for clarification of the industrial policy of the Congress as laid down in various resolutions passed by it from time to time. The matter was discussed in the Working Committee. Shri Kumarappa's communication and the President's reply thereto are given below:

## SHRI KUMARAPP'S COMMUNICATIONS

I wish to get a clear direction from yourself and the Working Committee on a fundamental issue that affects the very basis of both this association and the All India Spinners' Association.

The resolution passed at the Karachi Congress in March 1931 with reference to the future Swaraj Government envisaged by the Congress, amongst other statements, contained this clause 'the State shall own or control key industries, services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.'

In July 1934 at Benares, the Working Committee in dealing with the idea of Swadeshi, apart from stressing the use of Khadi, stated "activities of Congress organisations relating to Swadeshi shall be restricted to useful articles manufactured in India through cottage and other similar industries" and in giving effect to this since then all the Exhibitions at the All India Congress Sessions have restricted to Khadi and Village Industries Exhibits as allowed by our two Associations. This resolution went on to add "large and organised industries are in no need of the service of Congress organisation or of any Congress effort on their behalf."

The resolution of the Bombay Congress of October 1934, brought this association into being, had the preamble "whereas organisations claiming to advance Swadeshi have sprung up all over the country with and without the assistance of Congressmen and whereas much confusion has arisen in the public mind as to the true nature of Swadeshi and whereas the aim of the Congress has been from its inception progressive identification with the masses and whereas village reorganisation and reconstruction is one of the items of the constructive programme of the Congress....."

In the light of these we have envisaged that in Swaraj Government all large scale or mass production should be limited to Government owned or controlled bodies and should not be left to private enterprise. When the industries are planned functionally certain functions will call for mass production. For instance in pottery, a good deal can be done on cottage basis but blazing and firing kilns may be beyond the means of the individual potter; therefore, such functions should be performed co-operatively or under the Department of Industries.

On the other hand it has been argued by some people that since Presidents of the Congress and Congress Ministers open and bless textile mills, sugar mills etc. the Congress also supports large scale industries under private enterprise. If this interpretation is correct then at least a list should be given of such industries where Congress can tolerate large scale industries under private enterprise.

My own submission is wherever there is a conflict between cottage industries and large scale private enterprises the latter have to go over board.

Kindly let me have a clear direction on the matter.

## SHRI RAJENDRA PRASAD'S REPLY

The Congress policy regarding industries has been correctly defined in resolutions mentioned by you in your letter. So far as cloth is concerned all competition with Khadi whether from foreign or indigenous sources is to be discouraged. So far as the cottage industries are concerned the same principle will apply as soon as it is possible for the Congress to declare that a particular country industry has so far advanced as to be independent to mechanised industry of the class. Meanwhile in regard to such cottage industries as are being sponsored by the Congress through its A. I. Village Industries Association, it will be the duty of Congressmen and Congress Governments to give them all possible support.

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

Wardha— 9th. August to 18th. August 1939

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha under the presidency of Shri Rajendra Prasad from August 9 to 12, 1939.

The members present were Shris Sarojini Naidu, Vallabhbhai Patel, Pattabhi Sitaramanna, Bhubabhai J. Desai, Shankarrao Deo, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Harakrishna Mehta, Profulla Chandra Ghosh and J. B. Kripalani. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru was present by special invitation. Gandhiji attended the afternoon sittings every day.

### 1. Congress Exhibitions

The opinion of the Committee was that any exhibitions organised by Congress Committees must be organised on the lines of the Congress policy as defined in the Working Committee's resolution on Swadeshi passed at Benares in 1934, coupled with the Congress resolutions on Exhibitions and Demonstrations passed at the Bombay session, that is, exhibitions by Congress Committees be organised jointly by the local branches of the All-India Spinners Association and the All-India Village Industries Association.

*Benares, July 27 to 30, 1934*

The Working Committee is of opinion that the activities of Congress organisations relating to Swadeshi shall be restricted to useful articles manufactured in India through cottage and other small industries which are in need of popular education for their support and which will accept the guidance of the Congress organisation in regulating prices and in the matter of the wages and welfare of labour under their control.

*Bombay Session, October 26-28, 1934*

### EXHIBITIONS & DEMONSTRATIONS

Inasmuch as it is desirable to free the Reception Committee from the distraction and expenses attendant upon the organisation of exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations that take place at the annual sessions of the Congress and as these make it possible for smaller places to invite the Congress, the Reception Committee shall henceforth be relieved of the task of organising exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations. But as exhibitions and spectacular demonstrations are a necessary part of the annual national gathering, the duty of organising these is hereby entrusted to the All-India Spinners' Association and the All India Village Industries' Association which bodies shall organise these functions as to combine instruction with entertainment of the general public especially of the villagers, with the view to illustrate and popularise the activities of the two associations and generally to demonstrate the potentiality of village life.

### 2. Disciplinary Action

Shri A. N. Udhoji, M. L. A., C. P.

The Committee considered the explanation given by Shri A. N. Udhoji and passed the following resolution :—

Read the letter of Shri A. N. Udhoji of July 20, 1939 in reply to the President's letter calling for an explanation of his conduct as a member of the C. P. Legislative Assembly.

In view of the gross misconduct of Shri Udhoji in the C. P. Assembly and further in view of his attempt to justify his conduct by casting aspersions on the Congress organisation and prominent Congressmen with intent to discredit the Congress and injure the Congress work, this Committee is of opinion that Shri Udhoji has shown himself unfit for membership of the Congress. Resolved therefore that his name be struck off the Congress Roll of Primary members and he be removed from all Congress Offices which he might be holding as a member of the Congress. He will not be eligible to be enrolled as a primary member of the Congress for a period of three years from to-day. Further he be called upon to resign from the membership of the C. P. Legislative Assembly to which he was elected on behalf of the Congress.

This resolution be communicated to the Leader of the Congress party in the C. P. Assembly and the President of the Nagpur P. C. C. for necessary action.

### 3. Demonstrations of July 9 and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose

The Committee considered at length the implications of the action taken by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose and other office-bearers and members of the executive committees on July 9 when they organised protest meetings against the two resolutions passed by the last meeting of the A. I. C. C. The following resolution was passed :—

The Working Committee has given the most anxious consideration to the action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the erstwhile President of the National Congress in connection with two resolutions of the last meeting of the A. I. C. C. known as 'Satyagraha in provinces' and 'Congress Ministries and the P. O. C.' The Working Committee has also considered the long letter of Shri Subhas Bose appended hereto. The Working Committee with great sorrow and reluctance has

come to the conclusion that Subhas Babu has wholly missed the main point raised by the President of the Congress as clearly set forth in his declaration also appended hereto. As ex-President he should have also realised that after having received peremptory instructions from the President it was his clear duty as a servant of the nation to obey them implicitly even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling, to appeal to the Working Committee or the A. I. C. C. But he was bound, so long as the President's instructions stood, to carry them out faithfully. This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organisation, much more so of a vast organisation like the National Congress which is engaged in a life and death struggle with the best organised and most powerful imperialistic corporation in the world. It, what seems to be Subhas Babu's contention in his letter, that every member is free to interpret the Congress Constitution as he likes prevails there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time.

The Working Committee has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Subhas Babu. The Working Committee therefore resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline Shri Subhas Babu is declared disqualified as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939. The Working Committee trusts that Shri Subhas Babu will see the error of his ways and loyally submit to this disciplinary action.

The Working Committee has taken note of the indiscipline of many other Congressmen including responsible officials. But it has refrained from taking any action as the members acted under the inspiration of Shri Subhas Babu. The Working Committee, however, leaves it open to Provincial Organisations to take action if they think it necessary for the proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline.

The Committee further empowers the President to take disciplinary action against such members who instead of expressing regret by their speech or conduct for the indiscipline, persist in it. (See also *post*).

#### 4. Ceylon

The Committee having considered the situation in Ceylon as placed before them by Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru after his recent visit to the island, passed the following resolution :

The Working Committee, having considered the report of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his visit to Ceylon, as the representative of the Congress, to explore all possible means of bringing about a just and honourable settlement on questions relating to the Indian employees of the Ceylon Government, desire to record their appreciation of his labours and the success that has attended them in bringing the peoples of India and Ceylon nearer to each other. The Committee regret, however, that the Ceylon Government have not thought it fit to make any major change in the measures they had proposed in order to remove a large number of Indians from their employment under the Government, though the Committee are aware that assurances have been given that all cases of hardship will be carefully considered by the Government. The Committee regretfully feel that the action of the Ceylon Government in respect of these measures is not in conformity with justice or international practice.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has drawn attention in his report to the background of the problem which Ceylon has to face, to the new spirit of nationalism and the mass awakening that is following in its wake, and to the economic distress and unemployment which Ceylon, like every other country, has to deal with. The Working Committee desire to assure the people of Ceylon of every sympathy with this national awakening and of every desire to co-operate in the solution of economic and other problems which afflict Ceylon and India alike. Standing as they do for the ending of imperialism and all exploitation in their own country, they must apply this same principle to other countries also, and more specially to Ceylon which is not only a near neighbour but which has been connected with India from time immemorial by links which cannot break. While the Committee desire and expect that every Indian who goes abroad will be treated honourably and with justice, they do not want Indians to go anywhere as unwanted outsiders who exploit the people of the country. The Committee recognise the right of the people of Ceylon to be given preference in State service or otherwise in their country and are fully prepared to co-operate in this.

Of the hundreds of thousands of Indians who have gone to Ceylon and by their labour on the land and elsewhere produced wealth and increased the riches of the country, the great majority have settled down there and made Ceylon their homeland. They have thus earned the right to be considered on a par with the other inhabitants of the island and to have all the privileges and to shoulder all the responsibilities of citizenship. The other Indians, who have not been there for so long, have also given of their labour and service to Ceylon and deserve consideration and just treatment. The Committee is prepared to co-operate in all steps to adjust relationships so as to give every opportunity to the people of Ceylon to advance and find self-fulfilment. But such steps when they affect two parties must not be taken unilaterally and should take into consideration the interests of those who, for no fault of their own, find themselves in their present situations.

The Committee are convinced that for historical, geographical, cultural and economic reasons the fate of Ceylon is linked with that of India, and are desirous of strengthening these bonds for the mutual advantage of the two countries. In view, however, of the circumstances that have arisen, they are of opinion that all future emigration of labour from India to Ceylon must be completely stopped and they welcome the decision of the Government of India to this effect. Because of this stoppage of emigration, there is no longer any necessity for an emigration depot and the Mandapam depot should therefore be closed. In any event it is undesirable for a depot of this kind on Indian soil to be in charge of the Ceylon Government.

The following other resolutions were passed :—

#### 5. Condolence

This committee expresses its deep sorrow over the sudden demise of Sri Torun Ram Phookan, who had led Assam in the struggle for national freedom and rendered invaluable services to his province and to the nation in various capacities for a period of over twenty years.

#### 6. War Preparation

The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the critical international situation and to the danger of war that overhangs the world. In this world crisis the sympathies of the Working Committee are entirely with the peoples who stand for democracy and freedom and the Congress has repeatedly condemned fascist aggression in Europe, Africa and the Far East of Asia as well as the betrayal of democracy by British Imperialism in Czecho-Slovakia and Spain. The Congress has further clearly enunciated its policy in the event of war and declared its determination to oppose all attempts to impose a war on India. The Committee is bound by this policy of the Congress and will give effect to it so as to prevent the exploitation of Indian resources for imperialist ends. The past policy of the British Government as well as the recent developments, demonstrate abundantly that this Government does not stand for freedom and democracy and may at any time betray these ideals. India cannot associate herself with such a Government or be asked to give her resources for democratic freedom which is denied to her and which is likely to be betrayed.

At its meeting held in Calcutta on May 1, 1939, the All India Congress Committee reiterated this policy of the Congress and expressed its disapproval of the despatch of Indian troops to foreign countries. In spite of this clear expression of opinion, the British Government has sent, or is sending Indian troops to Egypt and Singapore against the declared will of the Indian people. Even apart from the War situation, the Central Legislative Assembly has previously declared that no Indian troops should be sent abroad without the consent of the Legislature. The British Government has thus flouted the declarations of the Congress and the Assembly and has taken steps which might inevitably lead to India's entanglement in a war. It has further prolonged the life of the Central Assembly by another year. The Working Committee cannot accept these decisions of the British Government and must not only dissociate themselves from them but also take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to the Congress policy. As a first step to this end the Committee call upon all Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly.

The Committee further remind Provincial Governments to assist in no way the war preparations of the British Government and to keep in mind the policy laid down by the Congress, to which they must adhere. If the carrying out of



this policy leads to the resignations or removal of the Congress Ministers they must be prepared for this contingency.

In the event of a war crisis leading to danger to any part of India from the air or otherwise it may be necessary for protective measures to be taken. The Committee will be prepared to encourage such measures if they are within the control of popular Ministries in the provinces. The Committee is however not agreeable to such protective measures being used as a cloak for war preparations under the control of the Imperial Government.

#### 7. Bengal Political Prisoners

The Working Committee is thankful that the hunger-striking Prisoners of Dum Dum and Alipore Jails have suspended their strike for two months. The Working Committee hopes that the Bengal Government will duly appreciate the admirable restraint exhibited by the prisoners and appeals to them to honour the India wide demand for their early and unconditional release.

The Working Committee also appeal to the Punjab Government and the Central Government, where the latter are concerned, to release all the political prisoners within their jurisdiction, especially as these have abjured violence.

The Working Committee express its strong conviction that it is wrong on the part of prisoners, political or otherwise, to resort to hunger-strike for their release. The Working Committee is of opinion that if prisoners can secure discharge by hunger-strikes, orderly government will become impossible.

#### 8. South Africa

The Working Committee congratulates the Passive Resisters of South Africa on their restraint in staying action in the hope of an honourable settlement. The Working Committee appeals to the Union Government not to put the Indian settlers of South Africa to the severe test of suffering for the sake of merely retaining the democratic rights which were twice guaranteed to them. Should, however, all attempts at an honourable settlement fail, the Working Committee assures the Passive Resisters that the whole of India will support them in their struggle.

#### 9. Prohibition in Bombay

The Working Committee congratulate the Bombay Government and the people of Bombay on the happy inauguration of prohibition in Bombay accompanied as it was by the magnificent demonstration in which all Bombay participated.

The Working Committee call upon the Ministries in the Provinces with a Congress majority to speed up prohibition so as to complete the programme within the time prescribed by the Working Committee, and where they have demonstrable financial difficulty to call upon the Central Government to make up the deficit.

#### 10. Harijan Temple Entry, Madras

The Working Committee congratulate the Madras Government on the determination in the face of difficulties with which they have passed the absolutely necessary legislation removing legal obstacles in the way of Harijans entering Hindu temples for worship, and more especially congratulate the vast body of the orthodox Hindu public who have co-operated with the trustees of the celebrated Meenakshi Temple of Madurai and of other temples in opening these to Harijans. The Working Committee hopes that this noble example will be followed by the trustees and worshippers of other temples.

#### 11. Charges against Shri D. P. Misra (C. P.)

11 Congress M. L. As. from C. P. had brought certain charges against Shri D. P. Misra, Minister of Local Self-Government, C. P. The Committee called their representatives Shris Kedar and P. B. Gole and heard them about these charges at some length. As they wanted to produce evidence to substantiate the charges the Working Committee appointed Shri Bhulabhai Desai to investigate the allegations and to favour the Committee with his opinion.

*Note*—Shri Bhulabhai Desai proceeded to Nagpur to hold the inquiry. The inquiry had hardly lasted for two days when Shri T. J. Kedar and his associates submitted an application withdrawing from the inquiry on the grounds that Shri Bhulabhai Desai (1) shut out some evidence to which they attached importance, and (2) did not admit official documents under the plea of the official Secrets Act. Shri Bhulabhai Desai replied that the grounds on which the withdrawal has been sought to be based are trivial. The evidence which he did not admit was admittedly hearsay evidence. As for the official documents he had made it plain

that he would examine the terms of the Official Secrets Act to see if these applied to any particular document which might be called for. No decision was arrived at shutting out any specific documents. In fact on examining the Act he found that no document likely to be reasonably required was covered by the Act. Shri Bhulabhai Desai reasoned with Shri Kedar and others as to the groundlessness of their apprehensions and urged them to proceed with the inquiry. They however declined to do so and persisted in their withdrawal. Thereupon the inquiry was suspended.

### 12. Bengal Dispute—CHANGE OF THE EXECUTIVE

Complaints were received by the A. I. C. C. Office from Shri Kiron Shanker Roy and several other members of the Executive of the Bengal P. C. C. that the requisition meeting of July 26, 1939 was invalid because (1) there was not sufficient notice for the meeting as required under the rules of the Constitution of the Bengal P. C. C., (2) that the meeting and its proceedings were 'malafide' in as much as they were meant to circumvent the constitution passed by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay regarding the formation of Tribunals, (3) that the persons appointed as members of the Tribunal were not impartial and their appointment defeated the purpose of the Constitution. The President wired to the Secretary of the Bengal P. C. C. to send the original requisition containing signatures and all certificates of posting notices to individual members, for convening the meeting of July 26, 1939 and other relevant papers through a special messenger to Wardha. The B. P. C. C. Office sent one of their under-secretaries Shri Krishna Kumar Chatterji with all the relevant papers. The Committee went through the papers and got all other information that they could from the under-secretary. After examining the papers and hearing the under-secretary and Shri Kiron Shanker Roy who had come to represent the appellants, the Committee decided that the meeting of July 26, 1939 was not properly called and was, therefore, null and void. The formation of the Tribunal by the new Executive was also declared invalid. The President was authorised to review the whole case and write the judgment. The following judgment was delivered by the President from Wardha on July 17, 1939 and communicated to the parties concerned.

#### PRESIDENT'S JUDGMENT

On July 26, 1936 there was a meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at which the then existing Executive Council was dissolved and a new Executive Council including office bearers was elected. The new Executive Council met on July 30, 1939 and constituted an Election Tribunal consisting of Dr. Charu Chandra Banerji, Shri Charu Chandra Roy and Mr. Muzaffar Ahmad. A complaint has been made to the Working Committee challenging the validity of the dissolution of the old Executive Council, the election of the new Executive Council on the grounds principally that the requisition meeting of July 26, 1939 was invalid, that there was not sufficient notice as required under the rules of the requisition meeting, that the meeting and the proceedings were malafide and with a view to circumventing the constitution passed by the All India Congress Committee at Bombay regarding the formation of Tribunals and that the persons appointed to the Tribunal are not impartial persons but partisans and as such their appointment defeats the purpose of the constitution. In the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee there are three groups—one led by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, a second group led by Shri Kiron Shanker Roy and the third group known as the Khadi group led by Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. On April 29, there was a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee and as a result of compromise between the various groups Shri Subhas Bose was unanimously elected president of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and he was authorised to nominate the Executive Council and the office-bearers in consultation with the group leaders within a week. Shri Bose could not make the nominations till June 8, 1939 and he made them, it is said, without consulting the group leaders as arranged at the time of the compromise. The Executive Council consisted of 148 members. It comprised, it is alleged, 37 members belonging to the groups of Shri Kiron Shanker Roy and Dr. P. C. Ghosh and a few neutrals and the rest belonged to the group of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. Shri Kiron Shanker Roy issued a statement to the Press on June 6, 1939 pointing out that nominations had been made out of time and without consultation. The first meeting of the Executive Council was held on June 9, 1939 and objection was taken to its formation on the above grounds but it was ruled out and the Council executed business.

A second meeting of the Executive Council was held on July 9, 1939 and it executed certain business. In the meantime the A. I. C. C. had met at Bombay and had amended the constitution of the Congress. One of the amendments was that there should be an Election Tribunal appointed by the Executive of the Provincial Committee unanimously or at least by a three-fourths majority and that the Provincial Tribunal should appoint District Tribunals. All election disputes were to be dealt with by these Tribunals. The Provincial Tribunal was to be appointed by a date fixed by the Working Committee and the Working Committee had fixed July 31, 1939 as the last date. The A. I. C. C. and its President were informed by some members of Bengal that although the constitution as amended at Bombay had come into force, Tribunals had not been constituted in Bengal and disputes were being decided by the Tribunals formed under the old constitution. The President as also the General Secretary wrote to the Bengal P. C. C. on the 15th July that Tribunals should be appointed under the new constitution. This letter must have reached the Bengal P. C. C. Office on the 16th or 17th July 1939. It is said that it was at this stage that the device of dissolving the old Executive Council and appointing a new one in its place was thought of to evade the provision of the new constitution which required that the appointment of the Provincial Tribunal should be made by at least a three-fourths majority of the Executive Council. That majority would not be available for any partisan Tribunal in the Executive Council as it was. There was hardly time for securing the requisite number of signatures for a requisition meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and so on the evening of the 18th July notices of a requisition meeting to be held on the 26th July were posted and notices were also published in newspapers on the morning of the 19th July 1939. The requisition was not shown to two members of the Bengal P. C. C. who wanted to see it and a letter written by Dr. P. C. Ghosh for a copy of the letter of requisition was not replied. The allegation is that these notices were issued before a requisition duly signed by the requisite number of members was received, that notices were issued in a hurry with incorrect addresses to members and were not received by several members at all and that in any case seven clear days' notice was not given by post or published in the newspaper as required by the Bengal P. C. C. No reason for dissolving the Executive Council is given in the notice. It is said on behalf of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee that it is not necessary to state any reason in the notice, that the meeting was convened, as objection had been raised to the constitution of the Executive Council by the very persons who are now objecting to its dissolution, that the notice given was sufficient and in accordance with the practice of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, that the requisition letter was open to inspection and the members who allege that they were not allowed inspection probably called out of office time or when the person in whose custody the papers were had gone out. It is denied that the motive was to circumvent the new constitution but it is admitted that the majority group felt that the minority had been generously treated and had more seats on the Executive than its strength in the Bengal P. C. C. justified. At the meeting of the Bengal P. C. C. on July 28, 1939 the Executive Council was dissolved and in its place was elected a new Executive Council in which the office-bearers were exactly the same as in the previous Council and the members were also the same except that some 24 members belonging to the minority group were replaced by members belonging to the majority group. In a matter like this it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge motives. The object of the new constitution was to ensure the formation of a Tribunal which would command the confidence of all groups and it cannot be denied that the Tribunal formed on July 30, 1939 does not command such confidence, seeing that a large number of members of the Bengal P. C. C. have objected not only to their appointment but to the appointment of the Executive Council itself which was responsible for bringing the Tribunal into existence. But even this would not be constitutionally sufficient to declare the meeting of July 26 invalid if it was in fact held in strict accordance with the constitution.

The Working Committee sent for the original letter of requisition and other papers and these were brought by Sjt. Krishna Kumar Chatterji, Assistant Secretary of the Bengal P. C. C. The requisition letter consists of ten separate sheets of papers. Of these, eight pages have the text of the letter addressed to the Secretary requesting him to call a requisition meeting under Rule 31 of the Bengal P. C. C. and there are signatures of members below the text. The date given in all these eight pages is July 15, 1939, in some pages in type like the text of the letter and in others in handwriting. Two pages contain only signatures without any text and

without any date. The number of signatures on these two pages is 55. The total number of signatures is 160 and the requisite number of signatures for a valid requisition is one-fourth of the total number of members of the Bengal P. C. C. which should be 544 but is 541, that is, 136 or 135. The signatures on a single page are of persons belonging to different districts and could not have been all obtained on July 15, 1939. There is nothing in the requisition paper to show when it was received in the office of the Bengal P. C. C. or by whom it was received in the office of the Bengal P. C. C. and the Assistant Secretary was unable to say anything about it. It is evident that all the signatures could not have been made on the 15th and they were evidently made on loose sheets, two of which were blank sheets without any text. They should have been open to inspection but unfortunately two members who wanted to see them could not do that, whatever the reason, and the letter of a third member for copy was not attended to. It is contended on these facts that the letter was not at all in existence with all the signatures on it on July 18, when the notices were issued, but that it was got ready between July 18 and 26, and hence the notice was irregular. The facts mentioned above raised a suspicion but it is not necessary to base a decision on them.

Rule 28 of the Bengal P. C. C. says :—"at least seven clear days' notice shall be given by the Secretary to the members of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for convening an ordinary or special general meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Notices will have to be sent individually to the members as well as to the Press". Thus under this rule notices have to be given both individually and through the Press and there is to be "at least seven clear days' notice." The Bengal P. C. C. has produced certificates of posting of notices to members. All these certificates contain only the name of the addressee and no address of any addressee is given in any of them as required by Postal rules. It is therefore impossible to say to what addresses the notices were sent. Some members have complained that they did not receive any notice at all and one member has submitted the envelope and the notice sent to him which contains a wrong address and which was for that reason received by him after the meeting. No address being given in the Certificate it is not possible to say to what addresses all the notices were sent. All these notices were posted at 7-30 p. m. on July 18, 1939 and could not therefore have been received by any member living outside Calcutta and by most members living even in Calcutta before the 19th at the earliest. The Press notice was published on the morning of July 19, 1939. The question is whether on these facts there was at least seven clear days' notice for the meeting. Whenever it is said that so many clear days' notice is required for a meeting, the day on which the notice is published and the day on which the meeting is to be held, are both excluded in counting the number of days. On that basis if July 15 and July 26 are excluded we get only 6 clear days and not 7 as required by the rule quoted above. It is said, however, that according to the practice of the Bengal P. C. C. it is not necessary to exclude the days as above indicated and that the notice is sufficient. The words of the rule are clear and even if such a practice exists it cannot over-ride the express provisions of the rule. When it is sought to dissolve the Executive Council which had been formed by the President under the authority of the Provincial Congress Committee without assigning any reason in the notice and assigning different reasons according to the varying inclinations of requisitionists, after it has been allowed to function in spite of protests, when the motive behind this move is at least open to suspicion and the dissolution and reconstitution of the Council result in excluding a number of members belonging to the minority group reducing them to much less than one-fourth and thus making the appointment of the Election Tribunal in accordance with the wishes of the majority without regard to the opinion of the minority possible, when the letter of requisition itself has no endorsement to show when it was presented and when its inspection was not available to members, it is necessary to scrutinise the whole thing carefully and insist upon a strict compliance with the rules of the Bengal P. C. C. This has not been done and the meeting of July 26, 1939 was invalid for want of sufficient and proper notice under the rules. Its proceedings are therefore declared null and void. The old Executive Council continues. The proceedings of the new Executive Council held on July 30 and the appointment of Election Tribunal are equally null and void.

*Demonstrations on July 9. (Correspondence)*

We give below the statement of the Congress President, Babu Rajendra Prasad

and the correspondence that passed between him and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose in connection with the Demonstrations on July 9 :—

*Press Statement of the President—6th July 1939.*

I have been much surprised to read in the papers Shri Subhas Chandra Bose's statement fixing the 9th July for protesting against resolutions passed by the All India Congress Committee at Bombay. It is well known that the resolution was passed after prolonged debate by a very large majority against the opposition of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. If Committees subordinate to the All India Congress Committee and office-bearers of such committees or minorities within the Congress be, in to defy such resolutions and organise and hold protest meetings against decisions arrived at after full deliberation by the All India Congress Committee or the Congress, there will be an end to all discipline within the Congress and a complete disruption of the organisation. I therefore desire to impress on all Congress Committees and their office-bearers that the policy and practice of the Congress no less than loyalty to the Congress organisation require that they should carry out and give effect to the resolutions passed by the All India Congress Committee and participation in and organising of protests and condemnation against such resolution will be a breach of discipline. I trust the Congress Committees and their office-bearers will desist from organising or participating in such protests and demonstrations.

*Telegram of the President to Sj. Bose—6th July 1939.*

Surprised to read your statement fixing 9th July for protesting against A. I. C. C. resolution stop Am issuing press statement in response from various quarters stop Hope you as President Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will please promote discipline in Congress by cancelling proposed meetings.

*Letter of the President to Sj. Bose—18th July 1939.*

A delicate and difficult situation has been created by your action in organising protests against certain resolutions of the All India Congress Committee, passed at Bombay. As I made clear in the statements which I issued before the meetings of the 9th July were held, it appears to me that it will be impossible for the Congress organisation to function if subordinate Committees and office-bearers of the Congress, whose duty it is to carry out and give effect to the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. and the Congress, were instead of doing that to organise protests and demonstrations against these resolutions. I personally look upon any such action on their part as not only destructive of all discipline but fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of the Congress organisation. I shall therefore place the whole matter before the Working Committee for consideration and such action, disciplinary or otherwise, as it may think fit to take. But in order that the Committee may have your explanation of your action and your point of view also before it I shall be obliged if you will let me have it at an early date.

*Letter of Sj. Bose to the President—7th August 1939.*

I am exceedingly sorry for the delay in replying to your letter of the 18th July, from Ranchi. You have asked me for an explanation of my action in protesting against certain resolutions of the All India Congress Committee passed at Bombay.

In the first place, one has to distinguish between protesting against a certain resolution and actually defying it or violating it. What has so far happened is that I have only protested against two resolutions of the A. I. C. C.

It is my constitutional right to give expression to my opinion regarding any resolution passed by the A. I. C. C. You will perhaps admit that it is customary with a large number of Congressmen to express their views on resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. when a particular session of that body comes to a close. If you grant Congressmen the right to express their views on resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. you cannot draw a line and say that only favourable opinions will be allowed expression and unfavourable opinions will be banned. If we have the constitutional right to express our views then it does not matter if those views are favourable or unfavourable. Your letter seems to suggest that only expression of unfavourable views is to be banned.

We have so long been fighting the British Government among other things for our Civil Liberty. Civil Liberty, I take it, includes freedom of speech. According to your point of view we are not to claim freedom of speech when we do not see eye to eye with the majority in the A. I. C. C. or in the Congress. It would

be a strange situation if we are to have the right of freedom of speech as against the British Government but not as against the Congress or any body subordinate to it. If we are denied the right to adversely criticise resolutions of the A. I. C. C. which in our view are harmful to the country's cause then it would amount to denial of a democratic right. May I ask you in all seriousness if democratic rights are to be exercised only outside the Congress but not inside it?

I hope you will agree that when a resolution is once passed by the A. I. C. C., it is open to us to have it reviewed or amended or altered or rescinded at a subsequent meeting of that body. I hope you will also agree that it is open to us to appeal against the A. I. C. C. to the higher court of appeal, namely, the open session of the Congress. You will agree further, I hope, that it is open to a minority to carry on a propaganda with a view to converting the majority to its point of view. Now how can we do this except by appealing to Congressmen through public meetings and through writings in the press? The Congress to-day is not an organisation of a handful of men. Its membership has, I believe, reached the neighbourhood of 45 lakhs. We can hope to appeal to the rank and file of the Congress and to convert them to our point of view only if we are allowed to write in the press and also to hold meetings. If you maintain that once a resolution is passed in the A. I. C. C. it is sacrosanct and must hold good for ever, then you may have some justification for banning criticism of it. But if you grant us the right to review or amend or alter or rescind a particular resolution of the A. I. C. C. either through that body or through the open session of the Congress, then I do not see how you can gag criticism, as you have been trying to do.

I am afraid you are giving an interpretation to the word 'discipline' which I cannot accept. I consider myself to be a stern disciplinarian and I am afraid that in the name of discipline you are trying to check healthy criticism. Discipline does not mean denying a person his constitutional and democratic right.

Apart from the fact that it is our constitutional and democratic right to protest against resolutions which in our view are harmful to the country's cause, a consideration of the merits of the two resolutions will show that such protests were really called for. In our view these two resolutions, if given effect to, will serve to accentuate the drift towards constitutionalism, to increase the influence, power and authority of the Provincial Ministries at the cost of the Congress organisations, to isolate artificially the Congress from the general public as also the A. I. C. C. from the rank and file of the Congress. Moreover, they will serve to undermine the revolutionary spirit of the Congress. Consequently, in the best interests of the country, these two resolutions should be immediately held in abeyance and ultimately altered suitably or withdrawn.

In this connection I cannot help drawing your attention to certain incidents at the time of the Gaya Congress in 1922 and after. Please do not forget what the Swaraj Party did in those days. Please do not forget either that when the A. I. C. C. amended the resolution of the Gaya Congress, the Gujarat P. C. C. resolved to defy it.

Lastly, please do not forget that Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India*, if my recollection is correct, that the minority has the right to rebel. We have not gone so far yet as to actually rebel against the decision of the majority. We have simply taken the liberty of criticising certain resolutions passed by the majority in the teeth of our opposition.

I am really surprised that you have made so much of what we regard as our inherent right. I hope you will accept my explanation as satisfactory. But if you do not do so and if you decide to resort to disciplinary action, I shall gladly face it for the sake of what I regard as a just cause. In conclusion, I have to request that if any Congressman is penalised in connection with the events of the 9th July, then you will also take action against me. If the observance of an All India Day of the 9th July is a crime then I confess, I am the arch-criminal.

With kindest regards.

## NOTES

### (1) The Hunger-Strike of Political Prisoners in Bengal

80 political prisoners in Dum Dum and Alipor Jails went on hunger-strike on July 7 and 8 to register their protest against the continued detention of political prisoners in Bengal and also to rouse public opinion to demand and secure their

immediate and unconditional release. The news of the hunger-strike created a widespread stir in the country. Prominent Congressmen in Bengal—Babu Sarat Chandra Bose, Dr. B. C. Boy, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and others—immediately got into touch with the Bengal Government and urged upon them the necessity of acceding to the reasonable demand of the hunger-striking political prisoners. Mahatma Gandhi, while appealing to the Bengal Government to do bare justice to the political prisoners by releasing them, urged upon the hunger-strikers to give up the fast as it was a wrong and unjustified method of securing their release. He sent his private secretary, Sri Mahadev Desai, with a message to interview the hunger-strikers and induce them to give up the hunger-strike, and also see the Bengal Ministers to secure their release. The Congress President hastened to Calcutta and made efforts in the same direction. Both Rashtrapati and Mahadev Desai had interviews with the Home Minister, and pleaded the cause of the prisoners. The Home Minister was however unresponsive to their persuasive appeal. He contended that so long as the hunger-strike continued it was not possible for him to take up the question of release. He also told them that it was not true that the Government had made up their minds not to release a certain number of prisoners. He claimed that the Government had released a majority of the prisoners and would continue the policy of release according to the recommendations of the committee, they had set up for the purpose. The interviews with the prisoners likewise bore no fruit. They were resolved to continue the fast unless released or given a definite assurance of release in the near future.

The lack of response both from the Government and the prisoners was a great disappointment to the Congress President. Mahatma Gandhi again made an earnest appeal to the prisoners to give up the fast which had served the purpose for which it was undertaken, the drawing of the attention of the country towards political prisoners, and therefore further prolongation of the fast was unnecessary.

The whole country responded to the appeal of the Congress President by keeping up a continuous agitation through meetings, demonstrations, resolutions and the like for the early release of the prisoners and thereby save their precious lives.

Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee also laboured hard for the cause. He had several interviews with the Home Minister and the political prisoners. His efforts in the beginning were not directed to persuading the political prisoners to give up the fast as he thought the fast was undertaken after mature deliberation and an effort to interfere with it would be futile and wrong, unless the Government gave a definite assurance of the early release of the prisoners. This position was a source of embarrassment to those who were striving to persuade the hunger-strikers to give up the fast. The desired assurance from the Government however did not come but the prisoners happily responded to the appeal of the Bose brothers and broke their fast on August 3—the 28th day of their fast. The prisoners were assured that the whole country and particularly the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee will make a strenuous effort, backed by direct action, if necessary, to secure their release.

The news of the termination of the hunger-strike was received with a feeling of relief throughout the country.

#### (2) Sri Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Ceylon

The All India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay in June last passed a resolution on Ceylon expressing grave concern at the measures proposed by the Ceylon Government with reference to their Indian employees. The following notice issued by the Chief Secretary, Ceylon explains the measures:

#### To all Daily paid Workers

1. Notice is hereby given that all non-Ceylonese daily paid workers who have been granted employment in any Department of Government on or after April 1, 1934, will be given one month's notice from July 1, 1939 of the termination of their services under Government, i.e., their last working day will be July 31, 1939. If these workers desire to return to their villages abroad they will be granted tickets to those villages for themselves, their wives and children, not exceeding four full tickets in all, together with a bonus of one month's pay to be paid to them on arrival at their villages.

2. Non-Ceylonese daily paid workers employed under Government prior to April 1, 1939, who have a break in service of more than a year ending after March, 1934, will similarly be given one month's notice from July 1, 1939 but provided their total service exceeds 5 years not, without unduly long breaks, they will receive bonuses on the lines of the voluntary scheme in paragraph 4 of this Notice.

3. Government does not propose at present to discharge non-Ceylonese daily paid workers not covered by the above paragraphs. It must, however, be recognised that retrenchment of daily paid jobs within the next year or two is inevitable and the policy will be adopted of discontinuing non-Ceylonese before Ceylonese. Workers discontinued on the ground of retrenchment of daily paid jobs will have no claim for any bonus or free tickets. The following terms are offered only to those who voluntarily return to their country of origin this year.

(a) Free Railway Warrants to his home outside Ceylon for the workman, his wife, and minor children not exceeding 4 full tickets, in all.

(b) (i) To a workman who has 5 years' continuous service but less than 10 years' service a gratuity of 2 months' wages.

(ii) To a workman who has 10 years' continuous service but less than 15 years' service a gratuity of 3 months' wages.

(iii) To a workman who has 15 years' or more service a gratuity of 1/18th of a month's pay for each month of service, reduced by two per cent, for each year by which his age at retirement falls short of 60. This offer will remain open until December 31, 1939 only.

5. For the purpose of this notice, non-Ceylonese means a person not born in Ceylon. A very few special cases such as children born abroad of Ceylonese fathers may be treated as exceptions to this definition. Consideration will also be given to cases where a non-Ceylonese worker is married to a Ceylonese wife and has minor children living in Ceylon, but no pledge is given regarding such cases.

6. Every daily paid employee will be required to complete either Form B or C. Form B applied to persons not born in Ceylon, and Form C to persons born in Ceylon. If a declaration on Form C that a person was born in Ceylon is found to be false, he will be forthwith discharged without notice or bonus, whatever his past services.

These measures created for the Indian settlers in Ceylon an anxious situation. To avoid the unnecessary and avoidable conflict between two friendly neighbours, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was deputed to go to Ceylon by the All India Congress Committee and effect, if possible, a peaceful settlement.

Pt. Jawaharlal reached Colombo by air on July 16. A magnificent reception was accorded to him by the people, Indians and Ceylonese alike. He was the guest of a special reception committee formed at the instance of Sir Baron Jayatilaka, the Leader of the State Council of Ceylon.

Jawaharlalji had a busy and strenuous time conferring with the ministers, representatives of the two chief Indian organisations in Ceylon, the Ceylon Indian Congress and the Ceylon Central Indian Association and other individuals concerned. He addressed several crowded public meetings. At these gatherings he emphasised for preserving and perpetuating the ancient cultural and historical ties that bound the two countries, the common fight they had to engage in against a common foe, and the imperialistic background of their economic and political woes. In his talks with the ministers he pleaded for a wider vision and broader approach to the problems that affected the Ceylonese and the Indians who had settled there and made Ceylon their home. The immediate problem, he pointed out, was a small and petty one in the context of the large problems they had to face. It was therefore essential that this small problem be approached in a large spirit. To the Indians and their representatives, he appealed to sink all the internal differences and be a united and strong body of self-respecting citizens pledged to protect the honour of India. He coupled this advice with an earnest appeal to them to consider Ceylon also as their home, serve it with devotion and loyalty and cultivate fraternal relations with its inhabitants.

This high-minded approach to the problem created a calm and favourable atmosphere all round. The ministers however could not see their way to agree to any major change in their scheme of repatriation. They agreed to a slight modification of the scheme and promised to take steps to minimise hardships consequent on repatriation. The visit of Pandit Jawaharlal, therefore, though it revived memories of traditional friendship between the two countries and lessened the bitterness inherent in the situation, did not succeed in achieving its objective. The resolution of the last meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha sums up the present situation of the Indians in Ceylon.

#### (8) The Release of Sri Jammalal Bajaj

It will be recalled that Sri Jammalal Bajaj, member of the Working Committee



and President of the Jaipur Praja Mandal was arrested in February last for defying an order prohibiting him from entry into the Jaipur State. He was going there to organise relief for the famine-stricken. No legal trial followed the defiance of the order, but he was kept in detention for an indefinite period. The rigours of the life of detention told on his health and he suffered from various complaints. When local medical talent proved inadequate, he was offered release provided he went to some foreign country for treatment. He declined to purchase liberty on these terms. On August 9 1939 he was however released unconditionally after a needless and harassing detention of more than six months.

In the course of a statement he issued to the press on his release he said, "Our struggle is not yet over; Jaipur has just passed through its first phase. The Satyagraha has made the people conscious of their strength and taught them how to use it when necessary. The sacrifices made cannot be lost. The goal is nearer today, but we have to carry on our agitation till our present demands, which are minimum and which can on no account be called anything but moderate, are fulfilled."

#### (4) Prohibition on August 1

August 1 was a memorable day for Bombay. On this day Prohibition was launched in the city and its suburbs amid great popular enthusiasm. The celebrations of the day included a huge procession terminating in a public meeting, the largest on record in the history of Bombay. It is believed that about 2 to 3 lacs of people assembled. "The entire Bombay and India", said Shri Vallabhbhai Patel addressing this surging mass of humanity, "were watching and the entire world was waiting for the day. That day had come. For the people of this country this day was the day of redemption and the day of deliverance from their bondage and from their slavery to the demon of drink. To-day Bombay killed its past history and opened a new chapter."

To their credit, it may be added, that the great Parsi community, the bulk of which was opposed to the reform, refrained from any hostile act to spoil the effect of the magnificent enthusiasm of the people. Some of the members of the community participated in the procession and the meeting.

Premier B. G. Kher and the Minister Dr. M. D. Gilder were the recipients of warm and grateful congratulations from all parts of the country. A difficult experiment was being launched with courage, faith and determination under circumstances of exceptional difficulty.

Mahatma Gandhi, the great inspiration behind the reform, sent the following message :

"I hope that good sense for which Bombay is famous will ultimately prevail and all combine to make the brave reform undertaken by the Bombay ministry a success it deserves to be. I am quite sure that the removal of the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs will confer lasting benefit on the country."

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

*Wardha—8th. to 15th. September 1939*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha from September 8 to 15, 1939. Sri *Rajendra Prasad* presided.

The members present were, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shri Sarojini Naidu, Sri Vallabhbhai Patel, Sri Rajendra Prasad, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Jairamdas Daulatram, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Bhulabhai J. Desai, Bidhan Chandra Ray, Shanker Rao Deo, Harekrishna Mehtab, Profulla Chandra Ghosh and J. B. Kripalani. Shris M. K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, M. S. Aney, Narendra Deo, Jaiprakash Narain were present by special invitation.

The invitees were present during the discussions of the main question of war crisis and India's attitude towards it.

#### 1. Delhi P. C. G.

The following decision was taken in the matter of the composition of the Delhi P. C. G. :—

"The Delhi Provincial Congress Committee consists of 40 members of whom 15 are elected delegates and the remaining 25 are the additional members who are elected. The District Congress Committee consists of 100 members. In the

Constitution there is no provision as to how the 25 members have to be elected but the procedure that has been followed with the assent of the All India Congress Committee Office has been to allow them to be elected by the 100 members of the District Committee by the method of single transferable vote. This procedure has been adopted with a view to enable all parties to be represented in proportion to their numbers in the District Committee.

"After the election of the delegates in January 1939 and before the presidential election some of the delegates approached the then president, Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, asking for ruling from him in favour of the method of cooperation of the 25 members of the P. C. C. by the 15 delegates. The P. C. C. which was then functioning had no information about this. Amongst the delegates, out of 15, nine members belong to one group and 6 to another group. On the day when the meeting for the election of the President was held and when A. I. C. C. members were to be elected a ruling from the then President Sri Subhas Chandra Bose was produced to the effect that the 25 members should be co-opted by the 15 delegates. The nine delegates decided to have a meeting of the delegates for purpose of co-option. The General Secretary of the P. C. C. protested against the change in the procedure and the ruling given by the then President but it was pointed out that the ruling was justified by the practice in other provinces. In accordance with that ruling 9 delegates co-opted 25 members of the P. C. C. The other six members did not participate. They have filed an appeal to the Working Committee challenging the validity of the formation of the new provincial Congress Committee.

"This could not be taken up by the Working Committee on account of the Working Committee not being in existence for some time and later on an explanation had to be called for from the provincial Office. The question is whether the delegates whose number is 15 are entitled to co-opt 25 members to the Provincial Congress Committee. It is admitted that there is no such rule in the Constitution of the Province. There is no doubt also that the practise in the province has been to allow the members of the District Committee whose number is 100 to elect the 25 members. The only question then is whether any practice in any other province can over-ride the practice of the Delhi Province. It is true that in Bombay and Nagpur the delegates co-opt the additional members of the Provincial Congress Committee but there is distinct provision in their rules permitting such co-option and the number of members co-opted is very much less than the number of delegates. Here in Delhi there is no rule and 15 members, if the contention is correct, co-opted 25 members. As a matter of fact it was not even 15 members who co-opted but only 9 who co-opted the 25 members.

"In the opinion of the Committee this cannot be justified either under the rules or in principle. The co-option of the 25 members is, therefore, set aside and the District Congress Committee is directed to elect the 25 members to the Provincial Congress Committee by the method of single transferable vote as early as possible. The Secretary will take early steps to see that the Provincial Congress Committee is reconstituted in accordance with this decision. It may be added that a letter was addressed to the Secretary of the P. C. C. on August 10, 1939 asking for any explanation that the Committee might have to offer in regard to the points raised in the appeal and a copy of the letters addressed to this Committee was also enclosed but no explanation has been received."

#### 2. A. I. C. C. Fund

The Committee decided that the A. I. C. C. fund in Bengal created from the contributions of the Congress members of the legislature lying in deposit with the leader of the Congress Legislative Party be transferred to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who may hold it on behalf of the A. I. C. C.

#### 3. Bengal P. C. C.

The following resolution was passed:

"A meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee was held on August 30, 1939, at which a resolution was adopted by it. This resolution reviews two decisions of this committee—one relating to disciplinary action which it felt obliged to take against its President and the other declaring null and void the proceedings of the meeting of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee held on July 24, 1939 and the appointment of the Provincial Tribunal. The resolution refers to many other matters which are wholly irrelevant to the decision and in effect it refuses to give effect to the decision of the Working Committee. It further calls upon the committee

Congress Committees in the province to hold special meetings to give their opinion on the two resolutions.

"The Working Committee note with regret that not only the tone and temper of the resolution but also its contents are objectionable in the extreme wholly unbecoming of a provincial committee in its relations to the Working Committee and such as would entitle this committee to take serious notice of them.

"The reasons for the decisions which this committee reluctantly took were fully stated and need not be repeated here. The Committee sees no reason to revise them. It desires to point out, however, that the action it took was called for in the interests of the Congress organisation which requires not only unity in Congress ranks but also discipline and obedience to its resolutions.

"It is accordingly resolved that the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee be called upon to give effect to the resolution of this Committee by electing a president. The election of a president is required also under the rules of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee according to which the Provincial Committee will remain incomplete without a President."

#### 4. Bengal Election Tribunal

The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee had failed to appoint an election Tribunal in terms of the Congress Constitution. The Working Committee had, therefore, to appoint the Tribunal. The President, however, wrote to the Secretary, Bengal P. C. C. that in spite of failure of the P. C. C. to appoint the Tribunal, if at that stage even the Secretary could suggest names for the Tribunal which were approved of by all the parties in the Bengal P. C. C., he would advise the Working Committee to appoint them. At Wardha where the leaders of the different Congress groups in Bengal were present the President called the Secretary of the Bengal P. C. C. who was also there and made to him the same proposal for the formation of the Tribunal. The Secretary, however, could give no agreed list. The Working Committee was, therefore, constrained to appoint the Bengal Election Tribunal in terms of the Congress Constitution consisting of the following :

1. Sri Satishchandra Das Gupta, 2. Sri Kshitish Prasad Chatterji, 3. Sri Priyaranjan Sen.

#### 5. Utkal Election Tribunal

The province of Utkal had failed to appoint its election tribunal in terms of the Constitution. The Working Committee therefore appointed one in terms of the constitution consisting of Sri Gopalbandhu Choudhry and Sri Harthardas about whom there had been general agreement in the Provincial Executive Council.

#### 6. Obituary—Rev. U. Ottama

The following resolution was passed :

"The Committee express their deep sorrow on the death of the Rev. U. Ottama who for years represented the Province of Burma on the All India Congress Committee and rendered valuable services in the cause of Indian Freedom."

#### 7. Complaint against Shri D. P. Misra

The Working Committee had appointed Sri Bhulabhai Desai to look into the complaint, take the necessary evidence and report to the Working Committee. He went to Nagpur but after a couple of days' inquiry Sri Kedar and his companions withdrew from the inquiry. Sri Kedar sent a long statement to the President giving reasons for their withdrawal and requesting him to grant an independent inquiry by a person of the position of a High Court judge. The Committee was of the view that what the complainants wanted was unreasonable. The appointment of Sri Bhulabhai Desai had been with their consent. They had themselves withdrawn from the inquiry without sufficient reason. Any further decision in this matter was left to the President.

#### 8. Sri Chintamani Misra (Utkal)

The following resolution was passed :

"In view of the report of Sri Rajendra Prasad on the charges brought against the Premier of Orissa by Sri Chintamani Misra, Office Secretary of Utkal P. C. C., this Committee calls upon Sri Chintamani Misra to offer full and frank apology for the charges which he has made and which have been found to be false and to resign his office from the Executive Committee of the Utkal P. C. C."

## 9. Ajmere P. C. C.

The Working Committee decided that the instructions of the General Secretary were to be carried out by the Ajmere P. C. C. that is, office-bearers were to call a meeting of the P. C. C. to decide the question about the vote of confidence in the President. The Committee also decided that when the meeting of the P. C. C. was called an official from the A. I. C. C. office should be present to observe the proceedings. All those who were the members of the P. C. C. before the present dispute arose were to be invited to participate. Members who were disentitled to attend in terms of the Congress Constitution for failure to wear khadi etc. may be precluded from participating in the meeting by the officer deputed by the A. I. C. C. office.

## 10. War Crisis and India

The Committee met on the 8th. As the president had not arrived and was to arrive next morning, it was decided that the meeting be postponed to the 9th. The Committee with all the invitees except Sri Jawaharlal Nehru met on the 9th. They met again on subsequent days. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru who arrived at Wardha from China on the 10th evening participated in the discussion from 11th morning. On the 11th the Working Committee decided to invite Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, to participate in the deliberations. The following telegraphic communications took place between the President and Mr. M. A. Jinnah :

"Congress Working Committee discussing War Situation. View serious question affecting India should like discuss with you. Would appreciate your joining discussions at Wardha any day upto 15th."

"Your telegram, shall be glad discuss situation with you at Delhi, cannot go Wardha owing previous commitments. Muslim League Working Committee Meeting Delhi seventeenth. Am bound reach Delhi thirteenth."

"Thanks your telegram. Purpose of inviting you was to receive your assistance in shaping Working Committee decision on critical situation. That purpose cant be served by my coming Delhi".

After prolonged discussions which lasted for nearly 5 days, the Committee issued the following statement :-

"The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

"The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well-established principles recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the Imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

"The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use India's resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If cooperation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-

operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic state in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses, taken away from her.

"The Committee are aware that the Government of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were, preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war in itself signifies the abject failure of the treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

"Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very powers who had previously declared their faith in it.

"Again it asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

"If the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide her own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

"The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great

end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

"The Working Committee have noted that many rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

"As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of imperialism and fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

"In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

"The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

"War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of fascism and imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

"The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

"The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and held together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world."

## 11. A. I. C. C. Meeting

The Committee were of the opinion that this momentous question of the War Crisis should be referred to the A. I. C. C. for any final decision. It was therefore decided that a meeting of the A. I. C. C. be called at Wardha on October 7, 1939 and subsequent days.

## 12. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru

The President re-nominated Sri Jawaharlal Nehru as a member of the Working Committee.

## 13. War Committee

The Committee passed the following resolution :

"In view of the situation arising out of the European War and statement thereon issued by the Working Committee, the Committee hereby appoint a Sub-Committee consisting of Sris Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman), Maulana Abulkalam Azad and Sri Vallabhbhai Patel to deal with the questions in connection with the situation."

## NOTES

## Pandit Jawaharlal's Visit to China

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru has been planning a visit to China as a mark of his personal and the country's sympathy for the suffering of the Chinese people in their national crisis. But the affairs in India and abroad prevented the fulfilment of the wish. When however he received pressing invitations from the Chinese people and the authorities, the call became irresistible. He left Allahabad for China on August 20, 1939. It was a personal visit but it had behind it the goodwill of the whole country, and particularly of the Congress.

He reached Chungking, the wartime capital of China, on August 23. A warm and enthusiastic welcome was given to him on his arrival. Representatives of various official and non-official organisations participated in the reception.

In his public speeches, press interviews and a special broadcast arranged for him, Pandit Nehru conveyed to the Chinese people and their leader, India's love and her appreciation of the brave and united struggle they were carrying on against a cruel and wanton aggression of an Imperialistic Power. He recalled the historic contacts of the two ancient civilizations, the amazing continuity and vitality that characterised them, the fearful ordeals of the present and the bright future that awaited them. He paid a tribute to the courage, determination and foresight of the Chinese leader, Marshal Chiang-kai-Shek and his brave and faithful consort Madam Chiang-kai-Shek. He also conveyed to them the messages of sympathy and good will which he brought from the Congress President, Mahatma Gandhi, and Poet Rabindranath Tagore.

Jawaharlalji had several interviews with Marshal Chiang-kai-Shek. In his all too brief visit he managed to see as much of the new China as he could. He was specially struck by the part women were playing in the new awakening and the revival of cottage industries, both of which forcibly reminded him of their counterparts in India.

His visit originally planned to last for four weeks was abruptly cut short by the crisis in Europe. The visit, though brief, reinforced and strengthened the bonds of Indo-Chinese friendship.

## Settlement in Jaipur

Ever since his release, Sri Jammalal Baji has been engaged in exploring possibilities for effecting a settlement between the Jaipur Durbar and the Jaipur Praja Mandal. It will be recalled that the Praja Mandal had launched a campaign of civil resistance for winning not responsible government but elementary civil liberties, the liberty to pursue constructive activities and the liberty to carry on peaceful educative propaganda among the masses with a view to preparing them for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja.

Shortly after the release of Sri Jammalalji the Public Meetings and Processions Regulation Act was repealed. This was but a small concession and fell short of the popular demand. It however indicated the willingness of the authorities to end the tension and appease the people. Sri Jammalalji therefore had a series of interviews with the Maharaja and passed the popular demand with his accustomed politeness. The interviews yielded the desired settlement. The main demand of the

settlement are : (i) the release of political prisoners, (ii) the lifting of ban on all newspapers, (iii) satisfactory amendment of the Public Societies Act so as to render unnecessary for a society to get itself registered.

The settlement was welcomed in all quarters in Jaipur. It was a fitting finale to the quiet and dignified struggle of the people for civil liberties.

#### Premiers' Conference—August 26 to 30, 1939

A meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Congress Provinces was held in Poona on August 26 and subsequent dates. Sardar Vallabhai, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Subcommittee presided.

The meeting was attended by the General Secretary of the Congress, the Premiers of Madras, Bombay, U. P., Behar, C. P., Assam, the Minister of Utkal, the Revenue Minister of Behar, and the Home Minister of Bombay.

The International situation arising out of the present crisis was the subject of an exhaustive discussion. The general administrative situation obtaining in the various Congress provinces was reviewed at length. The taxation measures undertaken by the Congress Governments were explained by the respective premiers. The prohibition programme as pursued by the Congress Ministries was discussed with special reference to its completion within the time-limit prescribed by the Working Committee and the sources of income to be tapped for the purpose.

Among other subjects dealt with were labour legislation, protection to handloom industry, co-ordination of industrial development so as to check over-production and uneconomic competition. Proposals for trade disputes legislation in different provinces were discussed and it was decided that, as far as possible, uniformity should be maintained. There were some industries like textiles and sugar which, in the existing circumstances of the country, had very nearly reached the saturation point. It was essential to regulate the further development of such industries and to this end inter-provincial co-operation was considered necessary.

### Proceedings of the All India Congress Committee

#### Wardha—9 and 10 October 1939

A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Wardha on October 9, and 10, 1939 in Navabharat Vidyalaya. Babu *Rajendra Prasad* presided.

209 members out of a total of 418 were present. The province-wise attendance was as follows : Ajmer 5, Andhra 25, Assam 5, Bihar 26, Bengal 45, Bombay 5, Delhi 2, Gujarat 14, Karnatak 9, Kerala 8, Mahakoshal 12, Maharashtra 19, Nagpur 5, N. W. F. P. 1, Punjab 13, Sindh 4, Tamilnad 23, United Provinces 33, Utkal 10, Ex-presidents 5. Total 274.

Before commencing the proceedings Babu *Rajendra Prasad* explained in brief the object for which the meeting was called. "We are meeting here to discuss the situation which has arisen out of the War. The Congress and the All India Congress Committee have from time to time passed resolutions defining our attitude. These resolutions except the last one were passed at a time when war was a possibility but was not actually going on. The latest statement of Working Committee was adopted after the declaration of war. You will have seen from that statement that we have asked the British Government to declare and define their war aims, with particular reference to India in unequivocal terms. The present war, we are all aware, is being waged by England and France against Germany. The declared objective is to free Europe from the constant fear of Nazi aggression and generally to secure freedom for all nationalities. We have expressed our detestation of Nazi methods of aggressions. We have also expressed our sympathy in unmistakable terms with all those countries which have from time to time been made the victims of unprovoked attacks. We protested when Abyssinia was attacked. We expressed our sympathy with the democratic forces in Spain. We protested against the conquest and annexation of Czechoslovakia. We have expressed our sympathy with all the suffering nations. We have thus made our position perfectly clear. What we want is clarification of the position of the allies and particularly of England. We are aware that in the past there have been occasions when the avowed objects for which a war was fought were not the real objects. The last Great War fought with slogans of self-determination and making the world safe for democracy, did not fulfil any of these objects. We are, therefore, naturally doubtful if the professed aims of the present war are its real aims.



"India at the present moment is not an independent country. If it were independent it would have considered whether it should join the present war. Many other countries which sympathise with Poland have not joined the war and it is possible that with all our sympathy with Poland and with the best wish in the world to save the cause of democracy, we might have decided in favour of neutrality. If India is asked to help in a war for restoring and guaranteeing the freedom of Poland, is it any wonder that India should ask to be made free before she can render any help? It is no question of bargaining or taking advantage of the difficulties of England. It is a simple and straightforward question that India asks. What part or lot can she have in a war waged for the freedom of other countries when her own freedom is denied to her by people who are fighting for freedom and democracy in Europe? We want a straight answer to that question. We have also said that a mere declaration will not satisfy us. We want that declaration to be given effect to to the extent it is possible under present conditions. We see that there are individual groups, parties and communities in India who have put forward their own claims to be considered. If the British Government and statesmen once make up their mind to deal fairly with India and to give effect to the ideas which they profess in regard to the war, it should not be difficult for them to evolve a formula that can satisfy all parties and groups.

"The resolution which the Working Committee will soon place before you asks you to endorse the statement of the Working Committee and authorise the Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to deal with the situation as it may arise in the present war crisis."

#### Resolutions—War Crisis

The following resolutions recommended by the Working Committee with some slight verbal changes were passed :

"The declaration of war in Europe has created an international situation of the gravest import to the world and to India, and the All India Congress Committee charged with the heavy responsibility of guiding the people of India in this moment of world crisis, has sought guidance from the principles and declarations of the Congress in considering this grave situation. The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free democratic state in India wherein the rights and interests of all minorities are preserved and safe-guarded. The means it has adopted in its struggles and activities have been peaceful and legitimate, and it has looked upon war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilisation. In particular, the Congress declared itself opposed to all imperialist wars and to the domination of one country over another.

In spite of the repeated declarations of the Congress in regard to war, the British Government have declared India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people and various far-reaching measures have been hurried through the legislatures and promulgated in the form of ordinances vitally affecting them and circumscribing and limiting the Provincial Governments.

The All India Congress Committee, however, does not wish to take any final decision precipitately and without giving every opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified, with particular reference to India. The Committee approves of and endorses the statement issued by the Working Committee on September 14, 1939 on the war crisis, and repeats the invitation contained therein to the British Government to state their war aims and peace aims.

While the Committee condemns Fascism and Nazi aggression, it is convinced that peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. In particular, India must be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The A. I. C. C. earnestly trusts that this declaration will be made by the British Government in any statement that it may make in regard to its war and peace aims.

The Committee desire to declare afresh that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress has always pledged itself.

The Committee approves of the formation by the Working Committee of the War Emergency Sub-Committee and authorises the Working Committee to take such

steps as may be necessary to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis."

### The Next Congress and Elections

In view of the crisis that has arisen and the necessity of preparing the nation to meet such developments as might take place, and avoiding the distraction of elections at a time of national emergency, the A. I. C. C. resolves that the annual session of the Congress, which was fixed to take place during the last week of December, be postponed to the second fortnight in March. The Congress delegate elections, the elections for the new A. I. C. C., and the Presidential election will stand postponed till such time as may be fixed later.

As, however, it may be considered necessary, in order to consider vital issues affecting the nation, to have a session of the Congress at an earlier date, a special session of the Congress may be convened by the Working Committee during the last week of December or at any other suitable time. The Working Committee is authorised to decide about the necessity of such a special session and to fix the dates and the venue for it. In the event of such a special session being held provision shall be made for delegates only, and the present delegates to the Congress shall be entitled to attend it. The A. I. C. C. for the current year will function as the subjects committee for the special session.

### Non-Official Resolutions

The A. I. C. C. office had received notice of 46 non-official resolutions to be moved at the meeting. According to the Constitution one full day is set apart for the consideration of the non-official resolutions. The president however explained to the committee that in view of the special purpose for which the meeting was called it was not advisable that their attention be distracted by other matters. He suggested that if the Committee was agreeable the non-official resolutions given notice of may not be taken up for consideration. The Committee accepted the suggestion and the non-official resolutions were dropped. Before the meeting dispersed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Babu Rajendra Prasad explained once again the deep significance and the far-reaching implications of the present crisis and the necessity for united action.

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

*Wardha—7th. to 11th. October, 1939*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held from October 7 to 11 at Wardha. Shri *Rajendra Prasad* presided.

The members present were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sris Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jammalal Bajaj, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Jairamdas Daulatram, Bhulabhai Desai, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Shanker Rao Deo, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Harekrishna Mehtab and J. B. Kripalani.

Shris Narendra Deo and Jaiprakash Narain were present by special invitation. Maulvi Mufti Kifayatullah though invited could not be present owing to reasons of health. Gandhiji was present throughout the sittings of the Working Committee.

### Accounts

(a) *China Fund*: Resolved that the money spent upon motor ambulance and other equipments as medicine etc, in connection with the China Unit, be written off.

(b) *Spanish Relief Fund*: Resolved that the sum of Rs. 323-5-8 standing to the credit of this account be transferred to the China Account.

### War Situation

The situation arising out of the European war was discussed and two resolutions dealing with 'War Crisis' and 'Congress and Elections' were adopted to be placed before the meeting of the A. I. C. C. as official resolutions.—For the text of the resolutions as they were finally passed by the A. I. C. C. see pp. 230-232.

### Provincial Constitutions

The Constitutions of the Provinces of Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra, Madras, and the North-West Frontier Province were placed before the Working Committee and approved.

### N. W. F. P.

The N. W. F. P. C. G. had made a rule that no member of the Congress can form a group inside or outside the Congress or carry on hostile propaganda against

it or describe himself by any other name than that of a Khudai Khidmatgar or Congressman. This rule was sent for the sanction of the Working Committee. The Committee gave the following decision in the matter :—

"The Working Committee considered the new rule framed by the Frontier P. C. C. recommending the addition of a proviso to Article IV of their constitution. The Committee understand that the object of the proposed amendment is to secure uniformity of policy and practice among Congressmen in the Province and to ensure conformity to discipline. The Committee realise that the Frontier P. C. C. has to face peculiar difficulties in the carrying on of its work in view of the special circumstances prevailing in the province, and to prevent disruptive tendencies from developing. Such discipline and unity of effort are all the more necessary because of the grave crisis that confronts the country and which necessitates full preparation for united action.

"The Committee are of opinion that the object aimed at by the proposed amendment can be achieved by the P. C. C. taking disciplinary action against any Congressmen who commits a breach of the fundamental policy of the Congress or who deliberately acts in such a way as to bring discredit on the Congress. The P. C. C. has power under the constitution to take such disciplinary action. The proposed amendment to Article IV of the Provincial constitution will thus be unnecessary.

"The Committee expect all Congressmen in the Province to help Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the acknowledged and unrivalled leader of the Province, in the difficult task that confronts him.

"The organisation of the Khudai Khidmatgars is Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's own creation and it has done signal service to the people of the province under his leadership. In 1931, at Khan Sahab's suggestion, this organisation of non-violent volunteers became part of the Congress organisation. The Khudai Khidmatgars have ever since then been the volunteer organisation of the Congress in the Frontier Province under the supreme command of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Their function is to serve the public and the Congress cause in the province, and, if they are to retain their efficiency, they must remain under his command and subject to his discipline. Congressmen in the Frontier Province should not form or associate themselves with any volunteer organisation other than the Khudai Khidmatgars. It is open to the Khudai Khidmatgars to have a pledge for their members in keeping with Congress policy."

#### Rajendra Prasad-Jinnah Correspondence

Following is the full text of the correspondence that passed between the Congress President, and the President of the Muslim League, Mr. M. A. Jinnah about the charges levelled by the Muslim League against Congress Provincial Governments in the matter of the treatment of the muslim minorities :—

*President's Letter to Mr. Jinnah—5th. October :—*

"In the resolution of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, passed recently in Delhi, reference has been made to Provincial Governments. It is stated that Provincial Autonomy in several Provinces has resulted in the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minorities whose life and liberty, property and honour are in danger, and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Congress Governments in various Provinces. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has also informed me that you mentioned this matter to him in the course of a recent conversation.

"We feel that these charges are wholly unfounded and are based on misapprehension and one-sided reports that might have reached you and the League. The Governments concerned have inquired into the matter whenever such charges have been made and have denied them. On a previous occasion we expressed our willingness to have any specific instances investigated by impartial authority. We feel strongly, and I am sure, you will agree with us, that such charges, when seriously made, should be inquired into and either substantiated or disproved. We would like this course to be adopted in regard to any specific instances that are put forward. If you agree, we could request the highest judicial authority in India, Sir M. Gwyer, Chief Justice of the Federal Court, to inquire into this matter. In the event of his not being available, some other person of a similar status and judicial position might be approached.

"I shall gladly place this matter before the Working Committee of the Congress and get them to pass a formal resolution to this effect.

"I am leaving for Wardha to-day and shall be obliged to you if you will send an early reply. I shall be in Wardha for about a week.

*Mr. Jinnah's Reply to President—6th. October :—*

"I am in receipt of your letter dated October 5, 1939. I beg to inform you that I have already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and the Governor-General and have requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorised under the Constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.

"The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration.

"In these circumstances, I do not wish to discuss further the various statements made in your letter as it is unnecessary to do so, but I must say that some of them are wholly inaccurate.

### NOTES—Gandhi Jayanti

Gandhiji's seventy-first birthday which fell on October 2, attracted more than usual attention and interest. His message of non-violence stood out in conspicuous relief against the tragic background of a destructive war going on in Europe.

The country celebrated the event as usual by devoting a whole fortnight to the promotion of such activities as are dear to Gandhiji, the chief being the propaganda and sale of khadi. Workers everywhere strove to dispose of large stocks of khadi. The birthday celebrations were also marked by public meetings held all over the country where the significance of Gandhiji's life, message and philosophy were explained to the public and congratulatory resolutions passed. Many papers issued special Gandhi Jayanti numbers. Many others published articles dealing with his life and work.

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University, Benares presented to Mahatma Gandhi on his birthday a memorial volume entitled 'Essays and Reflections on Mahatma Gandhi'. The volume is a collection of tributes from eminent persons in all spheres of life and from all parts of the world.

Mahatmaj received congratulatory messages from individuals and associations over the world, wishing him health and long life and praying for the success of his message of non-violence, peace and goodwill.

### All India States' Peoples' Conference

#### WAR AND INDIAN STATES

The Standing Committee of the All-India States' Peoples' Conference issued the following statement on October 4, at Wardha :

"The Standing Committee of the States' Peoples' Conference have met at a time of grave crisis in the world, when war rages in Europe and the people of India have to take vital decisions of the gravest import to their future. This future will necessarily comprise the States, and even in the present the crisis is having its direct repercussions in the Indian States. The Committee desire to associate themselves fully with the statement issued by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on September 14, 1939, and with the resolution of the All India Congress Committee on the War Crisis passed on October 10, 1939. Believing, as they do, in the unity of India and a common freedom for all the Indian people, they record their deep satisfaction that the Congress has, at this critical juncture, given powerful voice to the demand of the Indian people for democratic freedom. In this freedom to come the people of the States must be equal sharers and they must be prepared to shoulder equal responsibilities.

The immediate cause of this war in Europe was Nazi aggression and the Western allies have proclaimed that they are fighting in the cause of democracy, freedom and self-determination. With these objectives the Standing Committee is in full agreement but it is incumbent that these objectives should be cherished and applied to countries outside Europe and especially to India. The Standing

Committee therefore associate themselves with the request made by the National Congress to the British Government for a full and unequivocal statement of Britain's war and peace aims. These aims should be applicable to the people of the Indian States also, who live under an autocratic system which is more reactionary than even the Nazi regime against which Britain is fighting. As the Congress Working Committee has stated, "the British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year." To support this system in India is the very negation of democracy and all that Great Britain is said to stand for in the war.

Many of the Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources to Great Britain for the prosecution of the war and have expressed their support to the cause of democracy in Europe. It is incongruous in the extreme that such professions should be made while undiluted autocracy prevails in the States. The rulers have not in any way sought to consult their people before offering the resources of their States or committing themselves to the war. The Standing Committee, speaking on behalf of the people of the Indian States, cannot accept this commitment, or agree to this continuation of autocracy in the States because war has broken out in Europe.

The Committee notes that the war has already been used for the purpose of introducing new and stringent repressive measures and putting an end to civil liberty in many of the States. In some States, promised reforms in the administration have been deliberately postponed because of the war. A war, ostensibly for democracy, is thus resulting in greater autocracy and repression in the States and in stopping all advance. The people of the States express their strongest protest against this and are wholly unable to give their support to the war under these conditions. They may have to resist impositions forced down upon them.

In the opinion of the Standing Committee the question of introducing democratic institutions in the States is of urgent and vital importance, so that the people of the States might take their proper place in the shaping of a free and independent India and in the new world order to come. The committee therefore invite the various Rulers to declare that they accept the objective of full responsible government in their States and undertake to give effect to it, in the largest possible measure, in the immediate future. The new repressive legislation should be suspended and civil liberty allowed. India may be legally at war but there are no war conditions anywhere near India and certainly not in the States, which can justify the application of extreme measures of repression.

The Standing Committee desire to make it clear that the Rulers can expect no co-operation from the people unless these fundamental changes are made and the governance of the States is carried on with popular consent and through popular representatives.

The Committee send their greetings to the peoples of many States who are carrying on, with courage and fortitude, their struggle for democratic freedom and civil liberty. This struggle must inevitably become a part of the larger struggle for Indian freedom and for that the people should prepare.

#### Indian States and the Working Committee

The Standing Committee of the All India States' Peoples' Conference adopted the following resolution at Wardha on October 10, 1939.

"The Standing Committee resolves that in view of the Ludhiana Resolution of the All India States' Peoples' Conference, in the matter of closer relationship between the Standing Committee and the Working Committee of the Congress, Pandit Jawaharlal and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya be authorised to represent the Standing Committee before the Working Committee of the Congress so that effect might be given to that resolution."

The Ludhiana Resolution referred to is as follows:

"This Conference welcomes the great awakening among the peoples of the States all over India and the progress made by them in their struggle for responsible government and establishment of civil liberty. It sends its greetings to all those carrying on this struggle and expresses its solidarity with them.

"The Conference further desires to express its appreciation of and its gratitude to the National Congress and its leaders, especially Mahatma Gandhi, for the lead they have given in the struggle of the States' people and for the part they are taking in conducting them. In view of the development of this struggle and the Congress policy in regard to it, the time has come when this struggle should be co-ordinated

with the wider struggle for Indian Independence, of which it is an integral part. Such an integrated all-India struggle must necessarily be carried on under the guidance of the Congress and this Conference gladly pledges its loyal co-operation in it.

"This Conference, therefore, directs and authorises its Working Committee, which in future should be called the Standing Committee, to endeavour by every means to co-ordinate this struggle in close co-operation with and under the guidance of National Congress or any sub-committee that the Congress might form for this purpose."

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

*Wardha—22nd. and 23rd. Oct. 1939*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha on October 22 and 23, 1939, Sri Rajendra Prasad presided.

The members present were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sris Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Pattabhi Sittaramayya, Jairamdas Daulatram, Shankarrao Deo, Profulla Chandra Ghose, Harekrishna Mehtab and J. B. Kripalani.

Shri Rajagopalachari was present by special invitation. Gandhiji was present throughout the discussions.

### Negotiations with the British Government

The Committee considered the Viceroy's declaration about British War Aims and India and passed the following resolution :

"The Working Committee is of opinion that the Viceroy's statement in answer to the Congress invitation for a clear declaration of the British war aims, particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment among all those who were anxious to gain, and are intent upon gaining India's independence. This invitation was made not only on behalf of the people of India, but for millions of people all over the world, who were weary of war and violence, and Fascist and Imperialist systems which exploited nations and peoples and were ultimately the causes of war, and who yearned for a new order of peace and freedom. The Viceregal statement is an unequivocal reiteration of the old imperialistic policy. The Committee regard the mention of the differences among several parties as a screen to hide the true intention of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of Britain's *bona fides* regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community, but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. The only way to establish this freedom and to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole is through a democratic process which gives full opportunity to all. The Committee must, therefore, regard the Viceroy's statement as in every way unfortunate. In the circumstances, the Committee cannot possibly give any support to great Britain, for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

"The Committee earnestly appeal to the nation to end all internal controversies in this hour of great crisis and call upon all Congress Committees and congressmen generally to be prepared for all developments and eventualities, and to show restraint of word and deed so that nothing may be said or done which is not in keeping with India's honour or the principles for which the Congress stand. The Committee warn Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strikes and the like. The Committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India, and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that a programme of resistance, commensurate with the magnitude of the issue before the country, requires perfect discipline within Congress ranks and the consolidation of the Congress organisation.

"The Working Committee realise that the non-violent resistance offered by the Congress in the past has sometimes been mixed with violence. The Committee desire to impress upon all Congressmen that any resistance that may have to be

offered must be purged of all violence and to remind them of the pledges taken to this effect as early as 1921 during the Congress session at Ahmedabad and repeated on many subsequent occasions."

#### Instructions to Ministries and Legislative Parties

The Parliamentary Sub-Committee with the approval of the Working Committee issued the following instructions for the guidance of Ministries and Congress parties in the Congress provinces :—

"The resolution of the Working Committee calls upon Congress Provincial Governments to tender their resignation. These resignations should be given after the Assembly meetings which have been convened for the purpose of discussing such urgent business as may be pending but it is expected that resignations will be tendered by October 31, 1939.

"The Central Provinces and Orissa Assemblies have been convened to meet at the beginning of November and the Provincial Governments in these provinces will remain in office till after this meeting.

"Speakers and Deputy-Speakers and members of the Assemblies, Presidents and members of the Councils are expected to retain their offices and seats. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries are the only persons who are at present expected to resign.

"With regard to the resolution to be moved in the Assemblies on war aims, suitable amendments should be made in view of the new developments."

#### Charges Against Shri D. P. Misra

The President informed the Committee that two of the Congress members of the C. P. Assembly out of the 12 who had brought charges against Sri D. P. Misra have apologised and the rest had yet done nothing in the matter. The Committee decided that the 10 members who had not yet apologised to Sri Misra should be asked to do so by the end of October. If, however, they failed in this, suitable action be taken against them. The President was to write to them in this connection.

#### The Constitution of the Bombay P. C. C.

The Provincial Constitution of Bombay was placed before the Committee and sanctioned.

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

*Allahabad—19th. to 23rd. November 1939.*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Allahabad from November 19 to 23, 1939. Shri Rajendra Prasad presided.

The members present were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shris Sarojini Naidu, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jairamdas Daulatram, Bhulabhai Desai, Pattabhi Sitarammaya, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Shankarrao Deo, Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Harekrishana Mehtab and J. B. Kripalani.

Shris C. Rajagopalachariar and G. B. Pant were present by special invitation. Gandhiji participated in the discussions throughout the session.

#### Political Situation created by War

The Committee discussed the political situation in India created by the war and the resignation of Congress Ministries and passed the following resolution :—

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure the response of the country to the policy enunciated by them in regard to the war crisis in Europe and its repercussions in India. This policy, based on numerous declarations of the Congress, was laid down in the statement issued by the Committee on September 14, 1939, and subsequent events have amply justified its wisdom and expedience. The course of the war and the policy pursued by the British and French Governments, and, in particular, the declarations made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the world war of 1914-1918, is being carried on for imperialist ends, and British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end.

The Working Committee's unequivocal demand was for a declaration of war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism and in particular how these aims were going to be applied to India. These aims could only be considered worthy if

they included the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as an independent nation whose policy would be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people. The answer to this demand has been entirely unsatisfactory and an attempt has been made on behalf of the British Government to create misunderstandings and to befog the main and moral issue. In justification of this refusal to make a declaration in terms of the Working Committee's resolution, communal pleas have been advanced and the rights of minorities and of the Princes pleaded as a barrier to India's freedom. The Committee wish to declare with all emphasis that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demand of Congress, and the minorities, whatever their other differences might be, do not oppose India's right to freedom and independence. The Princes are represented by, and are the emblems of, the Paramount Power of India. In the end it will be the people of the Indian States who will determine what part they will take in a free India, though the British Government has consistently ignored their wishes in a matter which vitally affects them. In any event the wishes of those who may oppose India's independence are, and must be, irrelevant to the declaration of the British Government's intentions. The Committee can only interpret this attempt to avoid a statement of war aims and Indian freedom, by taking shelter under irrelevant issues, as a desire to maintain imperialist domination in India in alliance with the reactionary elements in the country.

The Congress has looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raises as essentially a moral issue, and has not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining. The moral and dominant issue of war aims and India's freedom has to be settled satisfactorily before any other subsidiary question can be considered. In no event can the Congress accept the responsibility of government, even in the transitional period, without real power being given to popular representatives. The Working Committee therefore approve of and endorse the reply dated November 4, 1939 sent by the Congress President to the Viceroy.

The Committee wish to declare again that the recognition of India's independence and of the right of her people to frame their constitution through a Constituent Assembly, is essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further co-operation. They hold that a Constituent Assembly is the only democratic method of determining the constitution of a free country, and no one who believes in democracy and freedom can possibly take exception to it. The Working Committee believe too that the Constituent Assembly alone is the adequate instrument for solving the communal and other difficulties. This however does not mean that the Working Committee will relax their efforts for arriving at a solution of the communal problem. This Assembly can frame a constitution in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction, and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration. The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desire them. The number of members in the Assembly should reflect their numerical strength.

The declarations made on behalf of the British Government being inadequate have compelled the Congress to dissociate itself from British policy and war effort, and as a first step in non-co-operation, to bring about the resignation of all Congress Governments in the Provinces. That policy of non-co-operation continues and must continue unless the British Government revises its policy and accepts the Congress contention. The Working Committee would, however, remind Congressmen that it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent. While a Satyagrahi is ever ready for a non-violent fight, if it has to come, he never relaxes his effort for peace and always works for its attainment. The Working Committee will, therefore, continue to explore the means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress. The Committee must however resist, by the non-violent methods of the Congress, all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which are not of their choice and everything that is against the dignity and freedom of India.

The Working Committee appreciate and express pleasure at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for the launching of Civil Disobedience, should this become necessary. But Civil Disobedience requires the same strict discipline as an army organised for armed conflict. The army is helpless unless it possesses its weapons of destruction and knows how to use them. So also an army of non-



violent soldiers is ineffective unless it understands and possesses the essentials of non-violence. The Working Committee desire to make it clear that the true test of preparedness for Civil Disobedience lies in Congressmen themselves spinning and promoting the cause of khadi to the exclusion of mill-cloth, and deeming it their duty to establish harmony between communities by personal acts of service to those other than members of their own community, and individual Hindu Congressmen seeking occasion for fraternising with the Harijans as often as possible.

Congress organisations and Congressmen should therefore prepare for future action by promoting this programme. They should explain to the people the message and policy of the Congress and the implications of the Constituent Assembly, which is the crux of the Congress programme for the future.

#### Congressmen in Govt. Committees and Dept. in Congress Provinces

The following decision was taken :—

In connection with the position of Congressmen in the Committees appointed by the Congress Governments, and the Congressmen engaged in executive work in departments like the rural reconstruction and prohibition, it was decided that they were to continue to function if no effort was made to change their status and if nothing was done that was repugnant to their sense of national self-respect.

#### Bengal Dispute

The following resolution was passed :—

The Working Committee have received complaints against certain acts and omissions of the Bengal Provincial Executive and obtained explanations regarding the same from the Executive of the Province. The Working Committee have also considered the resolutions passed by the Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at its meeting held on the 30th October, 1939. The Working Committee have once again to note with regret that the tone and temper of some of these resolutions are highly objectionable and wholly unbecoming a provincial committee in its relations to the Working Committee and to record the warning that if persisted in, the Working Committee will feel compelled to take notice of the same.

In particular the Working Committee record their decisions as follows :—

1. (a) The Working Committee note that the Executive Council have not been following Sections 38 and 39 of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee Constitution requiring that the Treasurer shall be in charge of the funds of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and that all money realised for the Bengal P. C. C. shall be deposited in the bank through the Treasurer and all withdrawals shall be made by cheques issued under the joint signatures of the President or Secretary and the Treasurer, and that the Secretary may keep with him upto Rs. 100 as imprest cash. Attention having been drawn to this serious breach of the constitution the Working Committee are now informed by the Secretary of B. P. C. C. that an account has recently been opened with a bank. The Committee direct that the sections of the Provincial Constitution in regard to funds and expenditure should be strictly complied with. The Committee would take serious notice of any non-compliance.

(b) The Secretary of the B. P. C. C. is required to submit without delay to the A. I. C. C. Office copies of the Audit report made by the auditor appointed by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee under Section 40 of the Constitution for the years 1937 and 1938.

(c) It is regretted that the accounts of the B. P. C. C. have not been inspected or audited by any A. I. C. C. under Article XX (d) of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress. They deputed Messrs Dalal and Shah of Messrs Chotalal M. Shah and Co. the Auditors of the All-India Congress Committee to audit the accounts of the B. P. C. C. for the years 1937-1938 and for 1939 upto October 31 and to submit their report before the next meeting of the Working Committee. In case the auditors of the All India Congress Committee are unable to conduct the audit within time the President is authorised to appoint any other person or firm of auditors to conduct the audit and submit a report. The Executive of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee are directed to place all account books, vouchers and other necessary papers at the disposal of the auditors for the purposes of the audit and furnish such explanation as may be required by the auditors. The auditor will conduct the audit of not only the general

funds of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee but of all other special fund or funds earmarked for particular purposes to be imbursement by the Provincial Congress Committee or its Executive Council or any of its Executive office bearers. In particular the auditor will audit the accounts of the funds raised out of contributions by the members of Legislatures under Resolution No. 3 dated August 14-17, 1937 and kept in custody of the Leader of the Congress Party in the Provincial Legislature. The Leader of the Congress party is requested to place all accounts, vouchers and other papers before the auditor for audit and to furnish explanations and give such other assistance in the audit as may be required by the auditor.

(2) The Working Committee note that in spite of the resolution passed by it at Wardha at its meeting held on September 8 to 15, 1939, calling upon the Leader of the Congress Legislative Party to transfer the fund created from the contributions of the Congress members of the Legislature, which had been published in the Congress Bulletin No. 5 dated September 25, 1939 at page 4, the Executive Council at its meeting on October 30, 1939, passed a resolution requesting the Leader of the Party to hand over the fund to the B. P. C. C. to be utilised by it. Further it is to be regretted that the Executive Council passed this resolution although it was aware that the fund was held by the Leader on behalf of the All India Congress Committee to whom it belonged in terms of the resolution of the Working Committee dated August 14-17, 1937 creating the fund subject to the limitation that it should be spent by the A. I. C. C. within the Province. The Committee is however informed that the fund is still in possession of the Leader and has not yet been transferred to the B. P. C. C. as desired by the Executive Council or to Maulana A. K. Azad as decided by the Working Committee. The Working Committee request the Leader of the Party to transfer it without any further delay to Maulana A. K. Azad in terms of the resolution of the Working Committee referred to above.

(3) The Working Committee disapprove of the resolution of the Executive Council relating to the Election Tribunal. It is unnecessary in the opinion of the Committee to repeat the reasons which compelled it to declare the election of the Provincial Election Tribunal by the Executive Council null and void and which were fully stated by the President in his judgment dated July 17, 1939 published in Bulletin No. 4 dated September 7, 1939. It is equally unnecessary to restate the circumstances in which the Working Committee was constrained to appoint the Provincial Election Tribunal on account of the inability or unwillingness of the Executive Council or its Secretary to suggest suitable persons and which are fully stated in the resolution of the Working Committee dated September 8 to 15, 1939 and published at page 5 of the Bulletin No. 5 dated September 25, 1939.

The Working Committee appointed persons whom it considers to be unconnected with any party and who by reason of their detached position are able to deal with disputes in an impartial manner. The Committee has no reason to agree with the view expressed by the Executive Council in the resolution referred to above.

In view of the fact that definite rules had not been framed for the guidance of the Election Tribunal some amount of overlapping of jurisdiction was inevitable. But the Committee note with regret that even in cases of such overlapping there was no justification for the Secretary of the B. P. C. C. to issue orders and publish them in the Press countermanning the orders or decisions of the Tribunal. In particular the Working Committee wholly disapprove of the action of the Secretary in countermanning the interim order of the Provincial Election Tribunal regarding certain disputes about Rajahmundry district and directing the subordinate Committee through the Press to act in contravention of the orders of the Tribunal. It is all the more regrettable that the Secretary has not withdrawn his orders even after the decision of the Tribunal. The Working Committee declares that the orders of the Secretary have no validity and calls upon him to formally withdraw the same and publish the fact of such withdrawal in the Press.

The Working Committee note that rules have now been framed under which the Tribunal will work and these rules have been considered by the Committee after hearing Sjt. Khitish Chandra Chakravarti, Advocate, who had been deputed by the President of the B. P. C. C. with full authority to represent that Committee. The rules are sanctioned as per separate note.

Now that rules have been framed it is hoped that no conflict will arise between the B. P. C. C. Executive and the Provincial Election Tribunal. The Working Committee direct that full co-operation be given by the Executive Council and its

office-bearers to the Election Tribunal in their work and their orders whether final or *ad interim* be carried out by all Congressmen and Congress Committees in Bengal including the Provincial Congress Committee and its Executive Council and all office-bearers of the Congress Committees.

**Disciplinary Action—Shris Kedar, Jakatdar and Subedar (C. P. Assembly)**

The following resolution was passed :—

The Working Committee have considered the correspondence that has passed between the President and Sriyuts T. J. Kedar, Jakatdar and Subedar, members of the Legislative Assembly of the Central Provinces and Berar. In the opinion of the Committee there is no justification for non-compliance with the order of the above mentioned members and the Committee has no option but to take disciplinary action against them. The Committee accordingly decide that the said Sriyuts Kedar, Jakatdar and Subedar be debarred from becoming a primary member of the Congress for one year. They are further disqualified from holding any executive office or membership of any elective body in the Congress organisation and from being members of legislative or municipal or local body on behalf of the Congress for a period of three years.

**Office-Bearers, Delhi P. C. C.**

*Demonstration of July 9*

The following resolution was passed :—

The Working Committee have considered the correspondence and the explanation received from the Secretary of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee. The Committee consider the action of Lala Shankerlal, President and Maulana Nooruddin Hihari, Vice President and Sardar Bahal Singh, Secretary of the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee in taking part in the meeting held on July 9, 1939, for demonstrating against certain resolutions of the All India Congress Committee as entirely wrong and unworthy of responsible office-bearers in the Congress organisation and condemns the same. In view, however, of the time that has elapsed since the offence was committed, the Committee consider it unnecessary to take any further action in the matter.

**Utkal P. C. C.**

Complaints having been received that the yearly accounts of the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee were not placed before the Committee, it was decided that the A. I. C. C. Auditor be sent to audit the accounts and report to the Working Committee.

**Annual Session Election Time Table**

The following time table for different elections in connection with the next session of the Congress was passed :—

1. Congress Session—*3rd Week of March, 1940.*
2. Announcement of President's election—*February 18, 1940.*
3. Meeting of Delegates to elect President and A. I. C. C. members—*February 15, 1940.*
4. Provincial nominations upto—*February 4, 1940.*
5. Election of Delegates upto—*January 29, 1940.*

**A. I. C. C. Circulars, Allahabad**

The following circulars was issued by the General Secretary to all Provincial Congress Committees on different dates :—

**I. Allahabad—27th. November 1939**

I am sending you herewith the resolution on the present political situation passed by the last meeting of the Working Committee held at Allahabad.

You will find that the operative part of the resolution lays stress upon the constructive programme which alone can prepare the country for a movement of civil resistance. Success of the constructive programme is the measure of our preparedness for the fight for freedom which has got to be waged in accordance with the traditional policy of the Congress. You will find that the Working Committee have again laid stress on the necessity of spinning by congressmen and the effective substitution of all mill cloth foreign or Indian by Khadi.

The resolution rightly emphasises the great need at the present juncture of internal peace and good will between the different communities and classes of our people. Hindu-Muslim Unity is the symbol of this larger and more comprehensive

unity. Experience has taught us that this unity can best be achieved by constant service of one community to the members of the other community in neighbourly love. The responsibility of the major communities in this respect is great.

Untouchability is a standing blot on our national life. Those who want justice to be done to them must render it in the same measure to those who are suffering from injustice at their hands. This will also prove to the world that ours is a moral struggle.

The resolution also lays stress upon the calling of the Constituent Assembly, not only for the purpose of framing our constitution by the most democratic device, that is, the will of the people of India, but as a powerful solvent of the vexed question of communal unity. In this connection I would invite the attention of your committee to an article in the latest issue of 'Harijan' entitled, "The only way."

Our War aims, the constructive programme and the idea of the Constituent Assembly must be popularised throughout the length and breadth of the country. All this is not civil disobedience but a necessary preparation for the coming struggle. A soldier has got to be ever ready. But he can fight only when the word of command is given. Therefore Congressmen and Congress women should keep the strictest vigilance over their words and actions lest they fire the fateful shot before the word is given by the generalissimo. Every hasty action instead of bringing the struggle nearer will only postpone it and those who are eager to join the just fight should show the utmost restraint and discipline during this period of waiting.

You will please keep this office informed about that progress of the work entrusted to Congressmen and Congress Committees by the resolution. You will let us have an idea of the machinery that you propose creating for this purpose.

#### Viceroy's Letter to President & Gandhi

Following correspondence passed between the Congress President and H. H. the Viceroy Dated New Delhi—End. November 1939.

You will remember that I agreed during our conversation yesterday to let you have in concrete form the position which I put to you and the other gentlemen who were present at the meeting, emphasising that I did so with a genuine desire to help, a desire fully shared by his Majesty's Government.

The proposition which I invited you and the other gentlemen present to consider as leaders of the Congress and Muslim League, was that, given the great importance of ensuring harmonious working at the centre, you should enter upon discussions between yourselves with a view to discovering whether you could reach a basis of agreement between yourselves in the provincial field, consequent on which you could let me have proposals which would result in representatives of your two organisations immediately participating in the Central Government as members of my Executive Council. I brought out, too, that in my judgment it ought not to be necessary absolutely to resolve every detail of such differences as may exist in the provinces. What was required, as was remarked in the course of the discussion, was a degree of agreement in respect of the provinces, such as to make it possible for my visitors and the organisations which they represented to put forward a scheme which could be considered for the centre.

I added, in regard to any arrangement at the centre:—Firstly, that one would hope that it might be found practicable to include also one or possibly more representatives of other important groups, and that was a question on which I should value your advice when we came to grapple with details. Secondly, that the arrangement which I invited you to consider for the centre would be an *ad hoc* arrangement for the period of war and would be quite distinct from much wider question of constitutional reform at the end of the war. And I mentioned that on the last point my declaration had set out the position of his Majesty's Government. I attach a copy of extracts from that declaration, which I brought to the notice of the meeting yesterday. Thirdly, that the position of anyone appointed to my Executive Council as a member of a political party would be identical in privileges and in obligations with that of the existing members of my Council. Fourthly, that the arrangement would be within the general scheme of the existing law. It would admittedly be inevitably a make-shift arrangement for the duration of the campaign.

I brought out that what was required now, if we could get a workable scheme together, was to put it into operation with as little delay as possible pending the more general review of the whole constitutional position, which his Majesty's

Government have expressed their readiness to undertake after the conclusion of the hostilities.

I think the above makes the position clear. Let me in conclusion repeat that as I said yesterday, I am at any time at your disposal or that of the other gentleman who attended our meeting, whether jointly or singly, to give any assistance in my power in reaching conclusions on these most important matters. I feel certain, as I said yesterday, that the suggestion I have put to you, reflecting as they do a very real and substantial evidence of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to reach a complete understanding, will receive full and sympathetic consideration from you.

*Extracts from Viceroy's Declaration : His Excellency the Viceroy attached the following to his letter to the leaders :—*

I stated in the declaration of October 18, 1939 : His Majesty's Government recognise that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future federal Government of India and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State, it will be necessary to reconsider, in the light of the then circumstances, to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate ; and I am authorised now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with the representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in framing such modifications as may seem desirable.

I added : I have, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as is stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the empire, to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The scheme of government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process. But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views. And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement, by any means in their power, in the hope of contributing to ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal.

I remarked finally, speaking of the demands of the minorities for an assurance that full weight would be given to their views and interests. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh or modify in any respect any important part of India's future constitution without again taking counsel with those who have, in the recent past, been closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

#### **President's Reply to Viceroy—8rd. Nov. 1939**

I thank you for your letter of Nov. 2 embodying in a concrete form the proposition which you placed before us when we saw you on Nov. 1. My colleagues and I have given our earnest consideration to it. We have had also the advantage of full talks with Mr. Jinnah but we find ourselves unable to vary the answer we gave you during the interview. At the outset I would like to say that both Gandhiji and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about the clarification of the war aims without which it is impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal. The present crisis has arisen owing to the outbreak of war in Europe and the action of the British Government in declaring India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people. This crisis is entirely political and is not related to the communal issue in India. It raises vital questions in regard to the war aims of the British Government and the position of India in relation to them.

The Congress Working Committee, as you are aware, issued a lengthy statement on September 14 in which they invited the British Government to declare their war aims and, in particular, how these aims were going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. It was further stated that the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and should guide their own policy. On October 19 the A. I. C. C. approved of and endorsed this statement and stated that in the Declaration to be made by the British Government India must

be declared an independent nation and present application should be given to this status at present to the largest possible extent. The committee further added that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity, and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities. Subsequent to this the policy of the British Government was declared in the Viceregal statement, extracts from which you have been good enough to send me. This statement was considered by the Congress Working Committee soon after and the committee expressed their opinion that it was unfortunate and wholly unsatisfactory.

As a consequence of this they felt compelled to declare that they were unable to give any support to Great Britain and to call upon the provincial Government in provinces where the Congress is in a majority to tender their resignations. It is worthy of note that the Viceregal declaration of the British policy met with the disapproval of an overwhelming body of opinion in India even outside the Congress. The subsequent statements made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament had not made any essential difference to the policy outlined in the Viceregal statement and as you have rightly pointed out that that policy is still governed by the extracts from it that you have kindly sent us.

I am afraid it is quite impossible for us to accept this policy or consider any step to further co-operation unless the policy of the British Government is made clear in a declaration on the lines suggested by the Congress. It has pained us to find the communal questions being dragged in this connection. It has clouded the main issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle all points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above.

Such a declaration applies to the whole of India and not to any particular community and the Constituent Assembly which will frame India's constitution will be formed on the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. We are all agreed that there must be full protection of minority rights and interests and this protection should be by agreement between the parties concerned. The British Government in taking and sharing the burden has, in our opinion, made a settlement of the question much more difficult than it should have been. It should allay all real anxiety on the part of the British Government when the Congress declares that it contemplates no constitution which does not carry with it protection of real minorities to their satisfaction. It seems to us that a clear declaration of the kind suggested is an essential preliminary to any further consideration of the matter. I should like to add that the recent developments in the European war have made it all the more necessary for a clear enunciation of war aims. If a satisfactory declaration is made a discussion of the proposal made by your Excellency will be appropriate and useful and we shall gladly discuss it with you. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that Gandhiji is in full agreement with this letter. We propose to leave tomorrow evening for Wardha unless your Excellency desires otherwise.

**Mr. Jinnah's letter to Viceroy—11 Nov. 39**

With reference to the joint interview which Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, president of the Congress, and myself had with you on Nov. 1, and in reply to your letter dated Nov. 2, I beg to inform you that I understood that the Congress leaders and myself were to consider the proposals of your Excellency. To quote from your Excellency's letter, 'the proposition which I invited you and the other gentlemen present to consider as leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League was that, given great importance of ensuring harmonious working at the centre, you should enter upon discussions between yourselves in the provincial field, consequent on which you could let me have proposals which would result in representatives of your two organisations immediately participating in the central Executive Council. I brought out, too, that in my judgment it ought not to be necessary absolutely to resolve every detail of such differences as may exist in the provinces. What was required, as was remarked in the course of the discussion, was a degree of agreement in respect of the provinces, such as would make it possible for my visitors and the organisations which they represented to put forward a scheme which could be considered for the centre.'

I understand that we were to consider your proposals without prejudice to the resolution of the Muslim League of October 22, stating that the declaration

of your Excellency on behalf of his Majesty's Government, was not satisfactory and required further clarification and assurances, and also without prejudice to the demand of the Congress for a declaration as adumbrated in the resolution of the A. I. C. C. on October 10, 1939.

In consequence, I met the leaders of the Congress. I was informed by them finally that they had come to the conclusion that they could not discuss any question with regard to matters referred to in your letter of Nov. 2, relating to the provincial field or to the centre, until the British Government had complied with their demand as embodied in the resolution of the A. I. C. C. Hence, these two questions were not further discussed.

#### Viceroy's Broadcast Declaration

The Viceroy broadcast the following statement before releasing the foregoing correspondence:

It is with profound regret that I have to announce that the conversations which, at my instance, had been inaugurated between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League have so far not achieved what I had hoped. The country is entitled to know, in a matter of such moment and at a time of such gravity, what was the nature of the proposition which I invited my friends in those two organisations to consider. I shall tomorrow publish correspondence which will make the position perfectly clear. Let me only say that my object has been, in these discussions, to bring together the leaders of the great parties and to endeavour to secure, as a result of personal contact between them, and with what personal assistance I could myself give, that measure of agreement in the provinces which, in their view, would enable them to put forward proposals for a constructive advance at the centre for the period of the war, such as would be represented by some expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council and by the inclusion in it of political leaders.

My declaration of Oct. 18 contemplated a consultative group. It offered an arrangement relatively so limited as that group only because of marked divergences of view between the great communities, divergences the existence of which held out no hope of harmonious working at the centre on the basis of joint membership of my Executive Council at a time when harmonious working was of first importance. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that that group holds out great possibilities for the future—possibilities, I feel sure, greater than are commonly realized.

I need not say that it is a profound disappointment to me, after so much endeavour on the part of his Majesty's Government on the part of those leaders with whom I have conferred and of their friends, as well as on my own part, that we have no more to show and that in so many provinces we should be left with no choice but to use the emergency provisions inserted for that purpose in the Government of India Act. As for those provisions, let me emphasize that they are an expedient and not a sanction. My own strong feeling in regard to their use I cannot better convey than by a paraphrase of the quotation that appears in Arabic characters upon the great gateway at Fatehpur Sikri. That quotation says, 'Life is a bridge—a bridge that you shall pass over. You shall not build your house upon it.'

Nor, in the wider field, do I propose to take this disappointment as final, or to abandon the efforts I am making to bring about a friendly adjustment of the differences in this country to the end that we can continue to co-operate over the achievement of our common objectives. Differences and difficulties such as those which now threaten to retard—even reverse—the course of constitutional development in India and the earliest attainment of the common goal will not disappear spontaneously, nor will they be conjured away by any refusal to recognize their existence. They will be resolved only by negotiations, carried out in a spirit of mutual accommodation and trust and with a firm resolve to succeed.

I will say no more than that to-night. But I would ask for patience and for the goodwill of the Indian people and of the great political organisations—their members and their leaders—in the efforts I propose to continue to make.

The difficulties are great. How great they are has been most clearly revealed by the events of the last six weeks. But the attempt to reconcile them is one which it is imperative to make and in which, whether I fail or I succeed, I shall spare no effort to bring about the result which is, I know, at the heart of all of those who care for India and for her future.

## NOTES

## The resolution on War-Crisis in Provincial Assemblies

The following resolution was moved by Premiers in the Provincial Assemblies of Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, U. P., Bombay, Orissa and North West Frontier Province:

"The Assembly regrets that the British Government have made India a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India and have further in complete disregard of Indian opinion passed laws and adopted measures curtailing the powers and activities of the Provincial Governments.

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to the British Government that in consonance with the avowed aims of the present war, it is essential in order to secure the co-operation of the Indian people that the principles of democracy with effective safe-guards for the Muslim and other minorities be applied to India and her policy be guided by her people; and that India should be regarded as an independent nation entitled to frame her own constitution and further that suitable action should be taken in so far as it is possible in the immediate present to give effect to that principle in regard to present governance of India.

"This Assembly regrets that the situation in India has not been rightly understood by his Majesty's Government when authorising the statement that has been made on their behalf in regard to India, and in view of this failure of the British Government to meet India's demand this Assembly is of opinion that the Government cannot associate itself with British policy."

The Premiers explained at length the implications of the resolutions in the light of the resolutions passed by the Working Committee from time to time since the outbreak of the war in Europe and the crisis arising therefrom in India. The amendment proposed by the Muslim League party was rejected by the Assemblies.

The Muslim League amendment was as follows:—

"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India and through them to His Majesty's Government that they should when considering the question of India's constitution either during the duration of the war or after it is concluded, bear in mind that the democratic parliamentary system of Government under the present constitution has failed, being utterly unsuited to the condition and genius of the people and, therefore, apart from the Government of India Act of 1935, the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly reviewed and revised de novo and that the British Government should not make any commitment in principle or otherwise without the approval and consent of the All India Muslim League, which alone represents, and can speak, on behalf of the Mussalmans of India, as well as without the consent of all important minorities and interests."

The resolution as originally moved, was passed by large majorities in the seven provinces. In U. P. and C. P. Assemblies it was passed with slight amendments which were accepted by the Congress party.

## Gandhi's Article—1. The Next Step

*The following article by Gandhiji appeared in the 'Harijan' Dated 30th. October 1939 :—*

I have never felt the weight of responsibility as heavily as I do today in connection with the present impasse with the British Government. The resignation of Congress ministries was a necessity. But the next step is by no means clear. Congressmen seem to be expecting a big move. Some correspondents tell me, if I only give the call, there will be an India-wide response such as has never been made before. And they assure me that the people will remain non-violent. Beyond their assurance I have no other proof in support of their statement. I have proof in my own possession to the contrary. These columns have contained some of that proof. I cannot identify myself with any civil disobedience unless I am convinced that Congressmen believe in non-violence with all its implications and will follow implicitly the instructions issued from time to time.

Apart from the uncertainty of the observance of nonviolence in Congress ranks is the tremendous fact that the Muslim League look upon the Congress as the enemy of the Muslims. This makes it well-nigh impossible for the Congress to,



organise successful non-violent revolution through civil disobedience. It will certainly mean Hindu-Muslim riots. Non-violent technique, therefore, demands the reduction of civil disobedience to the lowest term consistent with national self-respect. The offensive will have to be taken by the British Government. In a situation so delicate and unexampled no individual Congressman or even Congress Committee can be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The Working Committee should alone have the right to declare and regulate civil disobedience.

I have undertaken to guide the Working Committee, but my limitations appeal me. My physical condition makes it impossible for me to move about as I used to before. I am therefore cut off from all outward contact with the masses. Even the present Congress workers I do not know personally. I never meet them. My correspondence has to be restricted as much as possible. Therefore, unless Congressmen almost instinctively perceive the duty and the necessity of the preliminary action I am prescribing, my guidance will be not only useless but it will be harmful. It will create confusion.

I hold the opinion strongly that whilst by their own action the British Government have made it impossible for the Congress to co-operate with them in the prosecution of the war, the Congress must not embarrass them in its prosecution. I do not desire anarchy in the country. Independence will never come through it. I do not wish for the defeat of the British or, for that matter, of the Germans. The peoples of Europe have been helplessly drawn into the war. But they will soon be awakened from their torpor. This war will not be a war to the finish unless the whole of modern civilisation is to perish. Be that as it may, holding the views I do, I am in no hurry to precipitate civil disobedience. My prescription to Congressmen, for the time being, is to consolidate the organisation by purging it of all weaknesses. I swear by the old constructive programme of communal unity, removal of untouchability, and the charkha. It is quite clear that non-violence is impossible without the first two. If India's villages are to live and prosper, the charkha must become universal. Rural civilisation is impossible without the charkha and all it implies, i. e., revival of village crafts. Thus the charkha is the symbol *par excellence* of non-violence. And it can occupy the whole of the time of all Congressmen. If it makes no appeal to them, either they have no non-violence in them or I do not know the A. B. C. of non-violence. If my love of the charkha is a weakness in me, it is so radical as to make me unfit as a general. The wheel is bound up with my scheme of Swaraj, indeed with life itself. All India should know my credentials on the eve of what can become the last and decisive battle for Swaraj.

## 2. The Only Way

*The following article of Gandhiji appeared in the "Harijan", Dated the 19th. November 1939 :—*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has compelled me to study, among other things, the implications of a Constituent Assembly. When he first introduced it in the Congress resolutions, I reconciled myself to it because of my belief in his superior knowledge of the technicalities of democracy. But I was not free from scepticism. Hard facts have, however, made me a convert and, for that reason perhaps, more enthusiastic than Jawaharlal himself. For I seem to see in it a remedy, which Jawaharlal may not, for our communal and other distempers, besides being a vehicle for mass political and other education.

The more criticism I see of the scheme, the more enamoured I become of it. It will be the surest index to the popular feeling. It will bring out the best and the worst in us. Illiteracy does not worry me. I would plump for unadulterated adult franchise for both men and women, i. e., I would put them all on the register of voters. It is open to them not to exercise it if they do not wish to. I would give separate vote to the Muslims; but, without giving separate vote, I would, though reluctantly, give reservation, if required, to every real minority according to its numerical strength.

Thus the Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. Today we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organisation on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organisations to question, as they do question, its overwhelming representative character. The Muslim League is undoubtedly the largest organisation representing Muslims, but several Muslim bodies—by no means all insignificant—deny its claim to represent them. But the Constituent Assembly will represent

all communities in their exact proportion. Except it there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

Again the Constituent Assembly alone can produce a constitution indigenous to the country and truly and fully representing the will of the people. Undoubtedly such a constitution will not be ideal, but it will be real, however imperfect it may be in the estimation of the theorists or legal luminaries. Self-government to be self-government has merely to reflect the will of the people who are to govern themselves. If they are not prepared for it, they will make a hash of it. I can conceive the possibility of a people fitting themselves for right government through a series of wrong experiments, but I cannot conceive a people governing themselves rightly through a government imposed from without, even as the fable jackdaw could not walk like a peacock with feathers borrowed from his elegant companion. A diseased person has a prospect of getting well by personal effort. He cannot borrow health from others.

The risks of the experiment are admitted. There is likely to be impersonation. Unscrupulous persons will mislead the illiterate masses into voting for wrong men and women. These risks have to be run, if we are to evolve something true and big. The Constituent Assembly, if it comes into being—as I hope it will—as a result of an honourable settlement between us and the British people, the combined wit of the best men of the two nations will produce an Assembly that will reflect fairly and truly the best mind of India. Therefore the success of the experiment at the present stage of India's history depends upon the intention of the British statesmen to part with power without engaging India in a deadly unorganised rebellion. For I know that India has become impatient. I am painfully conscious of the fact that India is not yet ready for non-violent civil disobedience on a mass scale. If, therefore, I cannot persuade the Congress to await the time when non-violent action is possible, I have no desire to live to see a dog-fight between the two communities. I know for certain that, if I cannot discover a method of non-violent action or inaction to the satisfaction of the Congress and there is no communal adjustment, nothing on earth can prevent an outbreak of violence resulting for the time being in anarchy and red ruin. I hold that it is the duty of all communities and Englishmen to prevent such a catastrophe.

The only way out is a Constituent Assembly. I have given my own opinion on it, but I am not tied down to the details. When I was nearly through with this article, I got the following wire from Syed Abdulla Brelvi: "Considerable misapprehensions among minorities (about) Constituent Assembly. Strongly urge clarification details, franchise, composition, methods arriving decision." I think I have said sufficient in the foregoing to answer Syed Sahab's question. By minorities he has Muslims principally in mind as represented by the Muslim League. If once the proposition that all communities desire a charter of independence framed by a Constituent Assembly, and that they will not be satisfied with anything else, is accepted, the settling of details surely becomes easy. Any other method must lead to an imposed constitution mostly undemocratic. It would mean an indefinite prolongation of imperialistic rule sustained by the help of those who will not accept the fully democratic method of a Constituent Assembly.

The principal hindrance is undoubtedly the British Government. If they can summon a Round Table Conference as they propose to do after the War, they can surely summon a Constituent Assembly subject to safe-guards to the satisfaction of minorities. The expression 'satisfaction of minorities' may be regarded as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement. The question thus resolves itself into whether the British Government desire to part with power and open a new chapter in their own history. I have already shown that the question of the Princes is a red herring across the path. European interests are absolutely safe so long as they are not in conflict with 'the interests of India'. I think this expression finds place in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact.

Look at the question from any standpoint you like. It will be found that the way to democratic Swaraj lies only through a properly constituted Assembly call it by whatever name you like. All resources must, therefore, be exhausted to reach the Constituent Assembly before direct action is thought of. A stage may be reached when direct action may become the necessary prelude to the Constituent Assembly. The stage is not yet.

## Proceedings of the Working Committee

*Wardha—18th. to 22nd. December, 1939*

A meeting of the Working Committee was held at Wardha from December 18 to 22, 1939. *Sri Rajendra Prasad* presided. The members present were *Shree Sarojini Naidu*, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, *Sris Jawaharlal Nehru*, *Vallabhbhai Patel*, *Pattabhi Sitaramayya*, *Jairamdas Daulatram*, *Bhulabhai Desai*, *Sankar Rao Deo*, *Bidhan Chandra Roy*, *Profulla Chandra Ghosh*, *Harekrishna Mehta* and *J. B. Kripalani*. *Sri C. Rajagopalachari* was present by special invitation. *Gandhiji* attended the afternoon sittings throughout.

### Political Situation

The Working Committee took stock of the political situation and passed the following resolution :

The Working Committee have studied with regret the recent pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India. His reference to the communal question merely clouds the issue and takes the public mind off the central fact that the British Government have failed to define their war aims especially with regard to India's freedom.

In the opinion of the Working Committee the communal question will never be satisfactorily solved so long as the different parties are to look to a third party, through whose favour they expect to gain special privileges, even though it may be at the expense of the nation. The rule of a foreign power over a people involves a division among the elements composing it. The Congress has never concealed from itself the necessity of uniting the various divisions. It is the one organisation which in order to maintain its national character has consistently tried, not always without success, to bring about unity. But the Working Committee are convinced that lasting unity will only come when foreign rule is completely withdrawn. Events that have happened since that last meeting of the Committee have confirmed this opinion. The Working Committee are aware that the independence of India cannot be maintained, if there are warring elements within the country. The Committee are therefore entitled to read in the British Government's raising the communal question reluctance to part with power. The Constituent Assembly as proposed by the Congress is the only way to attain a final settlement of communal questions. The proposal contemplates fullest representation of all communities with separate electorates where necessary. It has already been made clear on behalf of the Congress that minority rights will be protected to the satisfaction of the minorities concerned, difference, if any, referred to an impartial tribunal.

Congressmen must have by now realised that independence is not to be won without very hard work. Since the Congress is pledged to non-violence, the final sanction behind it is Civil Resistance, which is but a part of *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* means good-will towards all, especially towards opponents. Therefore it is the duty of individual Congressmen to promote and seek good-will. Success of the programme of *Khadhar* as an accepted symbol of non-violence, harmony and economic independence is indispensable. The Working Committee, therefore, hope that all Congress organisations will, by a vigorous prosecution of the constructive programme, prove themselves fit to take up the call when it comes.

### Independence Day

Following resolution was passed :—

In view of the present political crisis and the urgent necessity of preparing the country for the struggle that may be forced upon us, in the near future by the attitude of the British Government towards our demands, it was felt that the Independence Pledge for this year should be so framed as to help in the preparation already on foot. The following resolution was therefore passed :

The Working Committee draw the attention of all Congress Committees, Congressmen and the country to the necessity of observing properly and with due solemnity Independence Day on January 26, 1940. Ever since 1930 this day has been regularly observed all over the country and it has become a landmark in our struggle for independence. Owing to the crisis through which India and the world are now passing and the possibility of our struggle for freedom being continued in an intense form, the next celebration of this Day has a special significance to it. This celebration must therefore not only be the declaration of our national will to freedom, but a preparation for that struggle and a pledge to disciplined action. The Working Committee, therefore, call upon all Congress Committees

and individual Congressmen to take the pledge prescribed below in public meetings called for the purpose. Where owing to illness or other physical disability, or to being in an out of way place, individual Congressmen are unable to attend a public meeting, they should take the pledge in their homes, individually or in groups. The Working Committee advise organisations and individuals to notify their Provincial Congress Committees of the meetings held as well as the individual or group pledges taken. The Committee hope that none who does not believe in the contents of the pledge will take it merely for the sake of form. Those Congressmen who do not believe in the prescribed pledge should notify their disapproval, stating reasons therefor to the Provincial Congress Committee, giving their names and addresses. This information is required not for the purpose of any disciplinary action but for the purpose of ascertaining the strength of disapproval of anything contained in the pledge. The Working Committee have no desire to impose the pledge on unwilling Congressmen. In a non-violent organisation compulsion can have little place. The launching of civil disobedience requires the disciplined fulfilment of the essential conditions thereof.

#### PLEDGE

"We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

"We recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain Independence.

"We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

"We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading good-will among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance in every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

"Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi, and so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only and endeavour to make others do likewise.

"We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and policies and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India."

#### Bengal P. C. C. affairs

The situation created by the attitude of the Bengal P. C. C. in regard to the resolutions of the Working Committee, instructions issued by the President, the spirit of non-cooperation shown by it towards the Election Tribunal and the mismanagement of the funds was discussed. The Committee was constrained reluctantly to pass the following resolution:

The Working Committee regret that they have once again to review the

working of the Executive of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and to take action thereon. During the last few months the affairs of the Congress in Bengal have come up for consideration on several occasions. On the last occasion, the Working Committee noted with regret the tone and temper of the resolution of the Bengal P. C. C. and its Executive Council. The Working Committee disapproved of the resolution of the Executive Council of the B. P. C. C. and their general attitude as regards the Election Tribunal and in particular directed the Secretary of the B. P. C. C. to withdraw his instructions to the District of Rajshahi countermanning the orders of the Tribunal and to publish the withdrawal in the Press. The Committee expressed the hope that there would be no further conflict between the Tribunal appointed by the Working Committee and the Executive of the B. P. C. C. and that full co-operation would be given to the Tribunal. The Working Committee regret that this hope has not been realised and as a result of complete lack of co-operation, the members of the Tribunal have tendered their resignations. The Secretary of the B. P. C. C. has failed to carry out the specific direction given to him by the Working Committee and neither the President of the B. P. C. C. nor the Executive Council have taken any action in that regard. The Working Committee feel that this state of things is deplorable and that they would, in the circumstances, be justified in taking action under Article XIII, Cl. C (ii) of the Constitution to make arrangements for carrying on the work of the Congress, in the province. In view, however, of the fact that fresh elections will be held soon, the Committee do not consider it necessary to take such an extreme step but they consider it absolutely essential to take steps to ensure that the elections be held in a fair and impartial manner. The Working Committee resolve therefore that an ad hoc committee consisting of the following persons with Maulana Abulkalam Azad as Chairman be formed to make arrangements for and conduct elections of delegates to the next Congress and all other elections to the Primary, Sub-divisional, and District Congress Committees according to the B. P. C. C. Rules. The ad hoc committee shall also have authority to delimit and form constituencies and to exercise all other powers exercisable by the B. P. C. C. or its Executive Council or any of its office-bearers in regard to these elections. The B. P. C. C. and its Executive Council and office-bearers as also all subordinate committees and their office-bearers in the Province shall deal with and give all co-operation to the ad hoc committee and carry out all instructions by that committee in regard to the elections aforementioned. The ad hoc committee shall function until the new B. P. C. C. is duly formed and its office-bearers take charge of the work of the Province.

The Working Committee request the members of the Election Tribunal to withdraw their resignations and to function in terms of the Constitution and the rules framed. All pending complaints relating to elections as well as any disputes arising out of the elections to be held hereafter under the direction and authority of the ad hoc committee shall be disposed of by the Election Tribunal.

Complaints have been received that the funds of the B. P. C. C. were not kept in bank or otherwise dealt with as required by the rules of the B. P. C. C. The Working Committee appointed Messrs. S. R. Batliboi & Co., Incorporated Accountants, Calcutta, as auditors, who have gone into the accounts and sent in their report. Serious irregularities including failure to deposit in bank a large cash balance as admitted are disclosed. These matters have been dealt with in a separate resolution.

#### Members of the Ad Hoc Committee

1. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad—*Chairman*. 2. Dr. B. C. Roy. 3. Dr. P. C. Ghosh. 4. Sjt. J. O. Gupta. 5. Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee. 6. Sjt. Kirona Banker Roy. 7. Sjt. Annada Prosad Choudhuri. and 8. Sjt. Benoyendranath Palit.

#### A. I. C. C. Fund in Bengal

The following resolution was passed:

Read the letter of Sri Sarat Chandra Bose, the leader of Congress Party in the Bengal Assembly, addressed to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Working Committee see no reason to alter its previous decision. The Committee note with satisfaction that the balance of the fund has been handed over to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as directed but regret that Sri Sarat Chandra Bose declined to place the account books for audit by the auditors.

The Working Committee note with regret that many of the Congress members of the Bengal Legislature have not paid their quota to the fund and a large amount

remains unrealised. The Leader of the Party is requested to recover the arrears and to take the co-operation of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in this matter, if necessary, and to report to the next meeting of the Working Committee.

#### Audit Report of Bengal Prov. Congress Committee Accounts

The Working Committee have considered the audit report submitted by Messrs S. R. Baliboi & Co., Incorporated Accountants of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in terms of the resolution of the Working Committee dated November 19 to 23, 1939.

For the period April 1, 1937 to March 31, 1938, beyond a set of accounts prepared by Messrs. P. K. Ghosh & Co., Incorporated Accountants, the auditors were not supplied with any books, papers or vouchers for the period. The Secretary of the B. P. C. C. reported to the auditors that when he assumed office on April 10, 1938 he was not handed over charge of the books by the then Treasurer and Secretary, and no attempts have been made to search for or trace those books of account, papers and vouchers. The books, papers and vouchers for the period 1st April, 1938 to 9th April, 1938 have not been produced and are said to be missing. Accounts from 10th April, 1938 to 31st March, 1939 and papers produced are incomplete.

The cash book which was produced to the auditors on the 9th December, which was written upto the 31st October, 1939, showed a cash balance of Rs. 17,718/8/1 and the balance as drawn was signed by the Secretary. There were no entries in the Cash Book for the months of November and December upto the date of its production nor was any rough Cash Book produced for the period. Thereafter, the Secretary called at the office of the auditors on the 13th December and stated that two items of cash receipt aggregating to Rs. 880 were inadvertently omitted from the Cash Book and the omission was due to the hurry in submitting the Accounts to the auditors.

According to the accounts as produced by them there was a closing cash balance of Rs. 18,598/8/1, no part of which was banked into the bank account of the B. P. C. C. or produced in cash or otherwise before the auditors. The Secretary then gave to the auditors a certificate of cash balance reading as follows:—

"I hereby certify that the cash balance of the B. P. C. C. Fund as at the close of business on 31st October, 1939 was Rs. 18,598/8/1 (Rupees eighteen thousand five hundred and ninety-eight, Annas eight and Pies one only) and the said balance was in my custody as on that date."

The B. P. C. C. had no bank account upto 31st October, 1939, crossed cheques which were received had to be cashed through some persons having a bank account. At the request of the auditors later on, a pass-book of the B. P. C. C. was shown being an account of the B. P. C. C. with the Pioneer Bank Ltd. The Account appears to have been opened so late as the 21st November, 1939, with an initial deposit of Rs. 560. But a cheque for that amount appears to have been dishonoured twice and ultimately credited as late as 9th December, 1939. The final balance on the 13th December, 1939 was Rs. 12,389/9/-.

The following paragraph from the report deals with the cash balance and where and how it was held:—

"We asked the Office Secretary to explain the fact that on 31st October, 1939, the balance as per Cash Book was Rs. 18,598/8/1 and yet the Bank Account started 21 days later with a balance of Rs. 560. We wanted to know what happened to the large cash balances on 31st October, 1939. We were informed by the Office Secretary that the cash balance was with the Secretary and that it was in his own personal bank account and was being gradually credited to the B. P. C. C. account from time to time and in instalments, and that the balance at bank on December 13, 1939, after meeting expenditure was Rs. 12,389-9. We understand that this bank balance includes Rs. 4,163-0-6 from the A. I. C. C. surplus."

It appears from the above facts that the Secretary of the B. P. C. C. failed to put its funds in a bank as he was bound to do. From the certificate it is quite clear that the Secretary was not in a position to produce the whole or any part of the balance of the funds, admitted by him to be with him on that day. From the manner in which the account was sought to be opened on November 21, 1939, it is clear that the monies were not easily forthcoming from where the same were held. The final balance in the bank includes Rs. 4,163-0-6 surplus from the A. I. C. C. meeting held at Calcutta. It is clear that a sum amounting to Rs. 10,571-8-7 was not produced nor banked by the Secretary upto December, 13, 1939 on which

date and long prior thereto the whole of that money ought to have been with him and ought to have been ready for production and being banked. Besides this, the state of affairs as disclosed by the audit shows that books, papers and vouchers were not regularly kept.

The Working Committee consider this state of things to be extremely unsatisfactory and detrimental to the prestige and efficient working of the Congress organisation in the Province. The Provincial Executive cannot be considered to have discharged their duty properly and functioned in terms of the Constitution of the B. P. C. C. which specifically requires that all monies should be duly banked. Even overlooking all other irregularities, and the absence of proper accounts, which should be easily available for inspection and audit, the Committee cannot tolerate that a large cash balance which at the lowest computation comes to over ten thousand rupees should remain unbanked or unproduced or otherwise unaccounted for even at the time of the special audit.

The Working Committee direct that the admitted cash balance should be handed over to the Treasurer, Mr. J. C. Gupta, and be deposited by him in a bank without the least further delay. The Treasurer is requested to treat the realisation and deposit of that fund as his personal responsibility and report to the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and to the General Secretary of the A. I. C. C.

In order that the state of affairs disclosed by the audit report may be rectified the Secretary and the Treasurer should take immediate steps to keep proper accounts and see that monies are disbursed in strict accordance with the rules of the B. P. C. C. and the practice obtaining in all public organisations; in particular they should see that no cash remains with any individual beyond the amount permitted under the rules for petty expenses and that no monies are paid out except through bank and on proper sanction.

#### The A. I. C. C. Circulars

The following circulars were issued by the General Secretary to all Provincial Congress Committee :—I—Allahabad—14th. December 1939

We have again to remind you that you have to send to our office a report of your activities in the current year commencing from the Tripuri session of the Congress. It is quite possible that such a report may take some time to be ready. In the meantime we shall be obliged if you can immediately furnish us with information on the following points :—

(1)—Number of Congress Committees—District, Tehsil, Mandal, Sub-Division and primary Committees functioning in the province.

(2)—The total number of office bearers.

(3)—The amount of money received from (a) membership fees, (b) other sources.

(4)—The amount of money spent by each organisation during the year and the main heads under which expenditure was incurred.

(5)—What arrangements, if any, have been made for the internal audit of the Committee.

(6)—The number of districts in your province and their populations.

(7)—The number, name and population of the states attached to your province.

(8)—The number of meetings of the Congress Committees.

(9)—The number of public meetings and demonstrations organised by the different Committees under instructions from the P. O. C.

(10)—Any constructive work done under the auspices of the Congress Committees.

As much information under the different heads as is available should be supplied. Where exact figures are not available approximate figures may be given. The approximation should however not be based upon guess work.

II—Wardha—23rd. December 1939

I am sending you herewith two resolutions passed by the Working Committee at its last meeting at Wardha. The resolution on the Political Situation reiterates our demand and points out that the communal question in this connection is irrelevant and the raising of it by the British Government is merely to cloud the issue. We are therefore "entitled to read in the British Government's raising the communal question reluctance to part with power." Naturally then we must complete our preparations for the final sanction behind our just demand, which is Civil Resistance. In this connection, the resolution directs all Congressmen to promote and

seek goodwill between the different communities inhabiting India, carry out the constructive programme with special attention to Charkha and Khadi which are the accepted symbols of 'Non-violence, harmony and economic independence.'

The second resolution deals with the observance of Independence Day. We have been observing this day since 1930. This time the observance has a special significance attached to it due to the political crisis through which the country is passing. Therefore, before we take the pledge, we are required to take stock of our efforts in the past. Without this stock taking the pledge is likely to become a mere form. The greatest instrument of a Satyagrahi is his own self. He has to analyse his past activities and find out whether he has made himself a fit instrument for the service of the starving millions of India; whether his service has not been tinged with self-interest and personal ambitions. He has to find out whether he has done his best to be just and generous to the minorities; whether he has carried out so far as in him lies the constructive programme. Only after we have taken stock of the past can we take the Independence Pledge in the proper spirit of service and humility. In that spirit the Working Committee would like all Congressmen to take the pledge this time on the appointed day.

The Working Committee would also like to gauge the strength of our army. It must necessarily consist of soldiers that not only believe in the goal of independence but also in the means that the High Command propose to employ. Soldiers in an army must all employ for the time being the weapons prescribed by the Command or else the army would be working at cross purposes and would be ineffective. The Working Committee, therefore, are anxious to know the numerical strength of their soldiers.

You will therefore please have the pledge translated in the language of your province and distribute it broadcast. You will send to this office as previously requested reports of the progress of your activities.

### III—Allahabad—29th, December 1939

I forwarded to you from Wardha two resolutions passed by the last meeting of the Working Committee dealing with the Political Situation and the Independence Day. These two resolutions must be read together. They state the Congress position with reference to the British Government and the Communal question raised by it. They also lay down for Congressmen and Congress Committees the programme that is to be followed in the immediate future to prepare the country for the struggle ahead. It is needless to remind you that non-cooperation between the Congress and the British Government has already commenced. It began with the resignation of Congress ministries. This resignation is the first step towards preparation for Civil Resistance. The rest of the programme is laid down in the two resolutions already referred to. It is essential that this programme be worked out as speedily as possible.

For the successful working of the programme I would suggest the establishment in the Provincial offices of departments dealing with separate items. Each department may be placed in charge of an officer or a small Committee that can easily meet from time to time.

The following Departments may be formed with advantage :

#### (1) PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

The department should periodically publish pamphlets and leaflets explaining the present political situation with special reference to the various resolutions passed by the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. since the outbreak of war in Europe. The demand for the Constituent Assembly must be popularised and explained especially with reference to the minority problem. Extensive tours of local leaders must be organised. All India leaders must be invited to go round the province. The head office will give all possible help in getting members of the Working Committee and other leaders to give time for this purpose.

#### (2) MINORITY DEPARTMENT

It must explain through the publicity department the efforts made by the Congress towards the solution of the minority problem with special reference to Muslims. How efforts in the past have failed in spite of the Congress will to agree: the part played by the communal decisions of the British Government introducing separate electorates with its permanent communal majorities and minorities. Now that agreement by means of pacts and conferences is dispaired of we propose to solve the question by means of the Constituent Assembly.



It may be necessary to have this department under a small Committee. The Committee must consist of representatives from the principal minorities, Muslims, Christians and where necessary Sikhs, Parsees, Anglo-Indians and domiciled communities. It must be clearly brought out that Congressmen seek to bring about better relations with minorities by personal contacts and goodwill and neighbourly service.

### (3) HARIJAN DEPARTMENT

If there is any one group of people whom we have kept down through the centuries and upon whom we have heaped injustice and indignity it is our Harijan brothers. Whatever is done towards ameliorating their condition is but a partial reparation of a great and grievous wrong. Their social, economic and political needs must be looked after. Efforts must be made to see that a fair number of them as also of members of the minorities are elected in local bodies and to offices and Committees in the Congress organisation.

### (4) CHARKHA DEPARTMENT

For this department too a small Committee will facilitate work. The committee must have among its members the agents and Secretaries or heads of Provincial branches of the Charkha Sangh. The work of the Committee will be to provide facilities to intending spinners, making available at reasonable cost, and funds permitting without cost to the poor villager, all instruments required for the different processes of carding, making slivers and spinning. The Committee must also facilitate the supply of cotton where necessary. It must make provision for instruction. Facilities must be provided for the collection of yarn produced, selling it or turning it into cloth. With the co-operation of the local branch of the Spinners' Association it must also work for the popularisation of Khadi and the disposal of the old and the new stocks. For all this it will be necessary that the Committee should have some funds. A grant from the P. C. O. funds will not be enough for this work. The Committee must therefore take upon itself the task of collecting funds for the purpose.

Other departments or Committees that may be necessary for our preparation may be added. The Head Office will be happy to afford all assistance in the carrying out of the programme. Cooperation of the Congress Legislative party and its leaders must also be obtained for all this work. In the districts too suitable machinery must be created to carry on the work.

The Central Office must be kept informed about the machinery created for carrying out of the programme of preparation. We must also get monthly if not fortnightly reports of the work done.

*IV—Allahabad—80th. December 1939*

The last meeting of the Working Committee was approached by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee with a request to drop the delegate's elections this year in view of the preparations that were already on in the country for the coming struggle. For various reasons the Committee did not find it possible to accede to this suggestion. They, however, hoped that least possible time and energy of Congressmen and Congress Committees will be diverted to this necessary work.

The Committee was pleased to note that as soon as a possibility of a struggle appeared on the horizon all differences political and personal were forgotten and Congressmen and women presented a united front. The Committee have no doubt that this goodwill and unity will not be disturbed by the coming elections. To ensure a calm atmosphere efforts should be made to secure as far as possible unanimous elections by common agreement. Whenever and wherever contested elections cannot be avoided Congress offices and those in charge of the elections will be greatly helping the national preparations for the coming fight, if they scrupulously avoid taking sides. We may also not forget that it is the duty of every Congressman to see that members of the minority communities and our Harijan brothers are allowed facilities to be returned in sufficient numbers in the elections.

Usually at the time of elections this Office receives many complaints about irregularities and injustices. At this juncture we would request all parties, groups and individuals to see that all disputes are amicably settled locally. The presence of the Election Tribunals should make reference to this office unnecessary. No money need be wasted on telegrams and telephone calls.

Every effort must be made to see that the atmosphere of unity, goodwill and

enthusiasm that pervades the country at this juncture, is disturbed as little as possible and most of our attention is directed to the preparations which I hope have already begun in your province. We may not allow petty personal jealousies and rivalries to stand in the way of our just and noble cause.

#### What it Means

*The following article by Gandhiji appeared in the December issue of the 'Harijan.'*

Those who believe that India can be freed and her freedom obtained only through non-violence, will surely believe that non-violence on a mass scale can only be observed by the masses being usefully and knowingly occupied for the sake of the country. What is that one thing which all can do easily without any capital worth the name and which in itself is calculated to soothe the nervous system? The answer will unequivocally be hand-spinning and its anterior processes. And it is indigenous to the soil. Millions can easily learn it, and its output is always current coin. If there were no mills, yarn would be as much valued as, say ghee. Famine of yarn would be as much felt as that of staples. If the people have the will, they can produce their cloth without much labour.

In the States of Europe where war is a recognised institution, adult males are conscripted for military service for a given number of years. In a country that wants to defend itself and regulate its life without war preparation, people have to be conscripted for productive national service. If a country's vital requirements are produced through a centralised industry, it will find it necessary to guard them even as a capitalist guards his treasures. A country whose culture is based on non-violence will find it necessary to have every home as much self-contained as possible. Indian society was at one time unknowingly constituted on a non-violent basis. The home life, i.e., the village, was undisturbed by the periodical visitations from barbarous hordes. Mayne has shown that India's villages were a congeries of republics. In them there were no ladies and gentlemen, or all were. Unless this argument is accepted by the Congressmen, I hold it to be impossible to establish non-violence that will be proof against temptation and that will stand true no matter how heavy the odds may be against it. Without such non-violence the country cannot put up a fight in which there is no going back and there is no defeat. The Congress will never prove its non-violent intention before Britishers and the world. The Congress non-violence is intended as well in respect of the rulers, as of all those who fear, distrust or despise the great institution. I have no doubt that want of this broad non-violence is responsible for our failure to reach communal unity. The fact is that Congressmen have not demonstrated that living non-violence in their dealings even among themselves. And I cannot resist the conviction that the deficiency of our non-violence can be measured by the deficiency in our khadi programme. Our belief in either has been half-hearted. I plead for full-hearted belief in both. And the Congress will be so invulnerable that it is highly likely that it will not have to go through the fire of civil resistance in order to win India's freedom.

With this background, let Congressmen carefully study the table (printed elsewhere in this issue) prepared for me by Shri Krishnodas Gandhi who is among the few khadi experts who have made a careful study of khadi in all its aspects. The figures are an interesting study for khadi-lovers. They will vary for inferior grades of cotton. But they are good enough as a workable index. Those who do not wish to take the trouble of studying the whole table should look at count 14 only. They will see that a self-spinner's khadi will cost him a little less than 8 as. per sq. yard. I have contemplated at least half an hour's spinning per day by every Congressman. "Even a novice should easily spin 100 yards in 80 minutes. Many spin 200 yards with ease during that time. Supposing the self-spinner needs 20 yards per year, he will need to spin at the most for one hour per day. Thus one-fifth of the whole population would need to spin at the most for five hours per day for enough yarn to clothe the whole of India at the rate of 20 yards per head. The present average is said to be 15 yards per head. With greater efficiency the working hours can be considerably reduced. I hold that such distributed production of khadi requires minimum of effort and expenditure. It means voluntary co-operation on a scale never witnessed anywhere in modern times. Given the required will, the proposition is perfectly feasible. Anyway I expect every Congressman to put up his best effort to spin intelligently as much as he can, and organise khadi sales among his neighbours; and this he should do in the belief that he is taking his due share in the preparation of the country for Independence.

# The General Secretary's Report

From March 1939 to February 1940

*The following is the text of the Report of the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress from March 1939 to February 1940 :-*

The Tripuri Session of the Congress met under special circumstances. The President-elect, Sri Subhas Chandra Bose was ill; there was no Working Committee in existence and Mahatma Gandhi was fasting in Rajkot. The controversies before and after the Presidential election had considerably embittered the atmosphere and confused the public mind. There was division in the ranks of Congressmen. Rival groups threatened to undermine the cohesion and solidarity of the Congress. It was in the midst of these distressing circumstances that the delegates were called upon to arrive at vital decisions of grave import to the country. There being no Working Committee, no official resolution could be placed before the subjects committee for guidance. However, after the routine business was over, the President received a requisition from over 150 members of the Committee requesting permission to move the following resolution clarifying the situation arising out of the Presidential election. This resolution was sought to be moved in the A. I. C. C. but the President overruled it. He however allowed the resolution to be moved in the subjects committee meeting.

"In view of various misunderstandings that have arisen in the Congress and the country on account of the controversies in connection with the Presidential election and after, it is desirable that the Congress should clarify the position and declare its general policy.

"This Congress declares its firm adherence to the fundamental policies which have governed its programme in the past years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies and that they should continue to govern the Congress Programme in future. This Committee expresses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee which functioned during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members.

"In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi alone can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that its executive should command his implicit confidence and requests the President to appoint the Working Committee in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji."

The resolution naturally raised controversies. Its interpretations as evidenced by the speeches made ranged from one of affirmation of faith in Gandhiji's leadership and confidence in the old Working Committee to no-confidence in the President. After a full dress debate the resolution was carried by a large majority in the subjects committee and later in the open session. Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, the President-elect, could not preside over some of the sittings of the subjects committee and at the open session owing to his continued illness. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the senior-most ex-President, therefore conducted the proceedings.

The other important resolutions passed at the session were about;

- (a) the National Demand, (b) Congress Machinery, and (c) Foreign Policy.

## NATIONAL DEMAND

The Congress objective of Independence and India's determination to resist the imposition of Federation were once again reiterated. The resolution declared that an independent and democratic India alone could solve rapidly and effectively the economic and other problems which were pressing so heavily on the masses. The capacity of Provincial Governments to solve these problems was limited and was rapidly nearing exhaustion. The proposed Federation strangled and suffocated India still further. The Congress was therefore firmly of the opinion that the India Act should be replaced by a Constitution framed by the Indian people themselves. To this end the Congress called upon all Congress organisations to get ready for a nation-wide struggle, promote unity and eliminate disruptive forces.

## CONGRESS MACHINERY

The rapid increase of members and the growth of the Congress organisation in recent years, had revealed irregularities and abuse in the working of the Congress Machinery. The organisation had outgrown the constitution. Some changes were necessary if it was to work smoothly and efficiently. Ordinarily changes in the constitution are effected in the open session. But the subjects committee of the All India Congress Committee could not formulate proposals for constitutional changes in the prevailing excitement at Tripuri. A resolution was, therefore, passed by the open session authorising the All India Congress Committee to incorporate such changes in the constitution as would obviate abuse and make for the efficient working of the organisation. Whatever proposals were adopted by the A. I. C. C. would come into force as if sanctioned by the delegates assembled in open session.

## FOREIGN POLICY

The Congress recorded its entire disapproval of and dissociated itself from British foreign policy which was helping in the destruction of democratic countries and reducing the world to a state of anarchy, where brutal violence flourished unchecked.

Resolutions were also passed about happenings in Palestine, the condition of Indians Overseas, Indian States and India's sympathy with China.

The Wafd Party of Egypt sent a fraternal delegation to attend the Tripuri Congress in response to an invitation of the President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. A cordial welcome was extended to the delegation and the visit was considered as symbolic of the solidarity of the two countries in their struggle for freedom.

## STALEMATE IN THE CONGRESS

The session was over but the trouble that began with the election of Sri Subhas Bose as president continued. The President was without a Working Committee. The Tripuri Session had affirmed its adherence to the fundamental policies adopted by the Congress under the guidance of Gandhiji and had requested the President to appoint the Working Committee in accordance with his wishes. The President owing to his continued ill health could not personally meet Gandhiji. He therefore started correspondence with him. He set forth in detail his own view of the situation. He thought that Pandit Pant's resolution was unconstitutional, especially that clause which related to the formation of the Working Committee in accordance with Gandhiji's wishes. The resolution lent itself to various interpretations. Some people held that it was one of no-confidence in him. Gandhiji was asked to give his interpretation of the resolution. The President gave Gandhiji the benefit of his views about the formation of the Working Committee. He thought the situation demanded a composite committee. He proposed to nominate 7 members of such a committee and would allow Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to nominate the remaining seven. The General Secretary was however to be a nominee of his. In a long letter, the President mentioned the policies which he wanted the Congress to adopt. These related to the launching of a struggle in the country, after a six months' ultimatum to the British Government and a forward drive on a comprehensive scale in the States. (These policies had not been accepted by the Congress at Tripuri). He was further of the view that violence in the country was on the decrease, and as such the country was better prepared for a final and decisive assault on British Imperialism. He also said that failure to adopt his suggestions would lead to civil war in the Congress. Gandhiji in his replies answered the various points raised by the President. He suggested a meeting of the leaders to settle the differences though he had his doubts whether this would serve the purpose, when there was mutual distrust and the differences were deep and fundamental. In his opinion the best course under the circumstances would be for the President to form a homogeneous cabinet of his own choice and go forward with his programme if these received the approval of the A. I. C. C. He expressed his dissent from the views expressed by the President on the problems engaging the attention of the country. He saw no reason why the so-called two blocks, the Right and the Left in the Congress, should not work, each on its own line, without creating bitterness leading to civil war about which the President had written.

The prolonged correspondence did not result in the solution of the tangle, viz., the formation of the Working Committee. There was widespread dissatisfaction in the country with this state of affairs which had reduced the whole Congress organisation to a state of inaction. Under these circumstances it was felt that only a

meeting of the A. I. C. C. could solve the tangle. A meeting was accordingly called. It assembled in Calcutta on May 1 and subsequent dates. There were prolonged conversations between the President and Gandhiji. Gandhiji declined to suggest the names for the Working Committee in terms of Pandit Pant's resolution. He held that, that would be an imposition on the President. He left the President free to choose his own Committee. In the alternative he suggested a conference with the old members of the Working Committee. The President accepted the latter suggestion. Sardar Vallabhbhai did not attend the meeting at Calcutta because of the excitement prevalent and also because, as he expressed afterwards, that whatever decisions might be taken, may be without any pressure being exerted by him. It was supposed that his antipathy towards the President and his influence with Gandhiji were responsible for what had happened. Discussions with the old members of the Working Committee brought the solution of the problem no nearer. Only two courses were therefore open to the President, either to form a homogeneous committee of those who agreed with him or to resign. At the A. I. C. C. meeting he explained the situation in the light of the conversations he had with Gandhiji and the ex-members of the Working Committee. He said that in view of Gandhiji's refusal to nominate a Working Committee and the failure of conversations with his ex-colleagues, no other course was left to him 'except to form a Working Committee of his choice. To this course he was averse, the reasons being that such a committee will not command the confidence of the House and of Gandhiji and also because he believed that a composite cabinet was desirable. Under such circumstances the A. I. C. C. could appoint a Working Committee of its own choice, but it might be one in which he may be a misfit. He therefore thought that if he resigned his presidentship and another president was elected, it would be easier for the A. I. C. C. to settle the matter. 'After mature deliberation and in an entirely helpful spirit,' as he said, he placed his resignation in the hands of the Committee. This necessitated the election of a new president. To avoid this unpleasant necessity, Pt. Jawaharlal moved before the House that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose be requested to withdraw his resignation and nominate afresh the old Working Committee, which functioned in 1938. Explaining the proposition, Pandit Nehru made clear how two seats will be available on the Committee for infusion of fresh blood which Sri Subhas Chandra Bose considered so necessary. The proposition was, however, not acceptable to him. It was therefore dropped. Thereupon the A. I. C. C. proceeded with the election of the new President. Babu Rajendra Prasad's name was proposed and accepted by the A. I. C. C. Thus ended the melancholy episode of the Presidential election.

The President, Babu Rajendra Prasad announced the following personnel of the new Working Committee:—

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Seth Jamsalal Bajaj (Treasurer), Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Sri Jairamdas Doulatram, Bhulabhai J. Desai, Shankarrao Deo, Harekishna Mehtab, Dr. B. C. Ray, Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghosh, J. B. Kripalani (General Secretary).

Among the important resolutions passed at this meeting was one on War Danger and another on the Amendment of the India Act. The Amendment Act was an attempt to concentrate all powers in the hands of the Central Government in the event of war. It struck at the very root of provincial autonomy and reduced the Ministers to impotence in matters relating to war. The A. I. C. C. therefore resolved that the Congress would resist the imposition of such an amendment. Another resolution demanded the release of political prisoners who were still in Jail in Bengal and the Punjab and a Political Prisoners' Day was observed all over the country in pursuance of this resolution and instructions issued by the President.

#### REFORM IN THE CONGRESS MACHINERY

The Calcutta meeting of the A. I. C. C. for obvious reasons could not give effect to the resolution of the Congress passed at Tripuri, about reform in the Congress Machinery and amendment in the Congress constitution. All that was possible was to appoint a small committee consisting of the President, Shris Jawaharlal Nehru, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Narendra Deo and J. B. Kripalani to go into the question and report to the next meeting of the A. I. C. C. This committee met in Bombay from the 3rd to 7th June, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi participated in its deliberations. Shris Vallabhbhai Patel and Bhulabhai Desai were present by special invitation. The Committee had before it about 200 concrete suggestions

forwarded to the A. I. C. C. office by Congressmen and Congress organisations in response to the General Secretary's request for suggestions. These were given careful consideration. Among the important changes recommended were :

- (i) permanent membership,
- (ii) maintenance of a register of such permanent members,
- (iii) no member to be eligible for election as a delegate to the Congress or as a member of a Provincial or a District Committee unless he has been a member of the Congress for three consecutive years,
- (iv) the Working Committee to be authorised to declare the members of any organisation, the object or programme of which involves political activities which are in conflict with those of the Congress, ineligible for membership of any elective committee,
- (v) appointment of a Provincial Election Tribunal and District Election Tribunals and
- (vi) two-thirds of the number of the seats of the A. I. C. C. to be filled territorially by the delegates by single distributive vote and the remaining one-third to be filled by all the delegates assembled by single transferable vote.

The Working Committee which met in Bombay from 21st to 27th June 1939, gave careful consideration to the recommendations of the constitution Committee. There was controversy about the recommendations (iv) mentioned above. It was believed that a change in the constitution of that nature would give dictatorial powers to the Working Committee and members of any party in the Congress opposed to them might be precluded from holding any office in the Congress organisation. Similar provision in the existing constitution related only to communal organisations. The words "any organisation" extended the scope of the article in question. Gandhiji's advice was that at that juncture no such constitutional amendments should be pressed which were opposed by any section of Congressmen. It was therefore decided that the proposed change which was objected to by the leftist groups in the Congress be dropped. Similarly recommendation (vi) which sought to modify the system of proportional representation by single transferable vote was also dropped because it was opposed by the socialists.

Among the important additions made were :

- (1) demarcation of fixed constituencies for the election of delegates.
- (2) The number of primary members to elect one delegate was fixed at 500.

The Bombay meeting of the A. I. C. C. was called especially to discuss the constitutional amendments. Since the two principal contentious recommendations were dropped, the rest of the proposed amendments were carried through more or less unanimously.

It was made clear by the President and others that the amendments adopted were by themselves not enough to rid the Congress of corruption and indiscipline. They would check technical irregularities but could be no substitute for purity and strength to character of individual Congressman and Congress committees which alone were the most effective antidote to the poison which was slowly undermining the foundations of the great organisation.

The Bombay Meeting of the A. I. C. C. though called expressly for considering constitutional amendments, had before it several important matters requiring immediate attention. Among them were the questions of (i) Indians in Ceylon, (ii) Indians in South Africa and (iii) Digboi Strike.

#### INDIANS IN CEYLON

The Ceylon Government adopted without any previous notice, measures which resulted in dismissal and repatriation of about 10,000 Indian daily paid workers in all departments of Government, to relieve as it was alleged, the pressure of unemployment in the country. The measures were unjust and provoked resentment in India and among the Indians settled in Ceylon. The problem of unemployment and economic distress was undoubtedly there as it was in all other countries where imperialistic exploitation existed but the way the Ceylon Government wanted to deal with it was unjust and arbitrary. It looked like the beginning of a drive against Indians in all vocations, and occupations, official and otherwise. Cessation of fresh recruitment of Indians was an understandable policy but the drive against Indians who had settled in Ceylon for a long time past and were settled residents of the country looked like a measure of racial discrimination. The A. I. C. C. Office, the Congress President, and Mahatma Gandhi were flooded with representations from Indian residents in Ceylon to intervene and avert the strike.

The Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. that met in Bombay in May, 1939 gave earnest consideration to these representations and passed a resolution viewing with grave concern the discriminatory measures which threatened a grave conflict between the two friendly neighbours. It however desired to explore every means of avoiding conflict and to this end appointed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to go to Ceylon and confer with the authorities and representative associations and individuals on behalf of India and do all that may be possible to effect a just and honourable settlement.

Pandit Jawaharlal reached Colombo by air on June 16. A magnificent reception was accorded to him by Indians and Ceylonese alike. He had a busy and strenuous time conferring with the Ministers, representatives of the Indian organisations and other individuals concerned. In the talks with the Ministers, he pleaded for a wider vision and broader approach to the problem that affected the Ceylonese and the Indians in Ceylon, who had settled there and made it their home. The immediate problem, he pointed out, was a small and petty one in the context of larger problems they had jointly to face. It was, therefore, proper and necessary that this small problem be approached in a liberal spirit. Jawaharlalji tendered some wholesome advice to the Indians in Ceylon also. While they must not forget the country of their origin, they must see that they serve their adopted country with devotion and loyalty and cultivate fraternal relations with its inhabitants. He addressed several large and crowded public gatherings where he emphasised the necessity of preserving the ancient cultural and historical ties that bound the two countries and remember the common fight they had to carry on against imperialism. This high-minded approach to the problem created a fine impression all round. The Ministers, however, could not see their way to agree to a major change in their scheme but they agreed to small modifications and promised to take steps to minimise hardships consequent on repatriation.

Pandit Jawaharlal submitted to the Working Committee a report of his visit to Ceylon. The Committee regretted that in spite of the earnest efforts of Pandit Nehru, the Ceylon Government did not think it fit to make any major changes in measures they had proposed against their Indian employees. The action of the Ceylon Government, the Working Committee pointed out, was not in conformity with justice or international practice.

The Committee recognised the right of the people of Ceylon to give preference to nationals in State service or otherwise in their country but surely the Indians who had settled there and made Ceylon their home and who had by their labour on the land and elsewhere contributed greatly to the riches and advancement of the common land, had secured the right to be considered on a par with the other inhabitants of the Island. Steps taken to adjust relationship should not be taken unilaterally. This Committee were averse to doing anything which might put a strain on the cultural, historical and economic bonds which united the two countries. But considering the circumstances which the unilateral action of the Ceylon Government had created, they were of the opinion that all future emigration of labour from India to Ceylon must be completely stopped. The decision of the Government of India to that effect was therefore welcomed.

#### INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

While in Ceylon steps were being taken which adversely affected thousands of Indians, in South Africa a grave situation was developing as a result of the policy of segregation pursued by the Union Government. Legislation was sought to be enacted prohibiting the lease and sale of land to Asiatics unless under certain conditions. There was talk of civil resistance. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress were being repeatedly appealed to for help and intervention. The Government of India, while professing sympathy with Indian settlers in their plight would not go beyond friendly representations and verbal protests. As in Zanzibar in the matter of Clove Boycott, so also here the burden of espousing the cause of our nationals fell on the Congress. The A. I. C. C. passed a resolution regretting the attitude of the Union Government which betrayed utter disregard of the obligations undertaken by their predecessors. The policy just initiated by them was a direct violation of the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement of 1914 and all the numerous subsequent undertakings given on behalf of the Union Government. The A. I. C. C. voiced the sympathy of the whole Indian nation behind the settlers' fight for self-respect and honourable existence. They expressed the hope that the dissension among the Indians will end and they will present a united front. The Union Govern-

ment was appealed to retrace their steps and carry out the undertakings of their predecessors.

No reassuring news is however to hand. Instead the latest we have from Capetown confirm all our worst fears. In the South African Union Assembly, Doctor Malan, Leader of the Nationalists moved : "The house regards it as urgently necessary that the policy of segregation between Europeans and non-Europeans, residentially, industrially and politically should be carried out without delay and that on the basis of the report of the Government Commission of 1939 on mixed marriages steps should be taken to prohibit miscegenation. The house requests the Government, therefore, to introduce immediately legislation necessary to carry out that policy effectively." The meaning of this reactionary piece of racial legislation is too plain for comment.

#### POLITICAL PRISONERS

Among the earliest measures adopted by the Congress Ministries was the release of political prisoners. The few that remained behind the prison bars in Bihar and U. P. were released as a result of the ministerial crisis in the two Provinces. The Congress attached great importance to the question of the release of political prisoners but in the non-Congress administrations of Bengal and the Punjab, particularly the former, no effort was made to solve the question. This produced widespread resentment in the two provinces. In Bengal the problem was particularly acute as there were internees who had been in jail for several years without a trial. Gandhiji interested himself in the release of the Bengal prisoners. He had prolonged consultations with the Bengal Government. As a result of these consultations almost all the internees and a number of prisoners were released in batches. A considerable number however still remained in jail. There were threats of hunger-strike by the prisoners. They had declared to Gandhiji that they had no faith in terrorism. Yet they were kept on in spite of the fact that those who were released were not known to have created any trouble. Under these circumstances, it was but proper and just that the remaining prisoners be released. But the Bengal Government, for reasons best known to them, took a different view of their responsibility.

The prospect of indefinite detention made the prisoners desperate. Some 80 political prisoners in Dum Dum and Alipore jails went on hunger-strike on July 7 and 8 to register their protest against their continued detention and also to rouse public opinion in favour of their release. The news of the hunger-strike created widespread stir in the country. Prominent Congressmen in Bengal got into touch with Bengal Government and urged them to take timely action and avert an unpleasant crisis. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the Bengal Government to do bare justice to the prisoners and release them. The Congress President, Shri Mahadeo Desai, Shris Subhas Chandra Bose and Sarat Chandra Bose, all in their several ways, intervened to avert the crisis. The prisoners responded to these appeals and gave up hunger-strike on an assurance being given by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose on behalf of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee that steps would be taken, including direct action, to secure their early release. The news of the termination of the hunger strike was received with great relief throughout the country.

The Working Committee passed a resolution expressing grateful appreciation of the action of the prisoners in suspending the hunger-strike. They hoped that the Bengal Government and also the Punjab will release political prisoners within their jurisdiction, especially as these have abjured violence. The Working Committee, however, took care to point out that it is wrong on the part of prisoners, political or otherwise, to resort to hunger-strike for their release.

#### DEMONSTRATIONS ON JULY 9 AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST

##### SHRI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

The Bombay A. I. C. C. in June passed two resolutions; one related to 'Satyagraha in provinces' and declared that no Congress-man may offer or organise any form of Satyagraha in the administrative Provinces of India without the previous sanction of the Provincial Congress Committee concerned; the other defined the relation between Congress Ministries and the P. C. C's. The resolutions were opposed by Shri Subhas Chandra Bose and the socialists, but were passed by a large majority after full discussion. It was expected that the decisions thus democratically arrived at would be loyally accepted by Congressmen, especially Congress Committees and their office-bearers. But very soon a surprise was sprung upon the country by the



action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. He fixed July 9 as an all India protest day when a country-wide agitation against the said two resolutions was to be inaugurated. The Congress President on hearing of the proposed demonstrations issued a statement in which he warned Congress Committees and their office-bearers against participating in these demonstrations. He made clear that if the resolutions of the A. I. C. C. passed after mature deliberation were defied by Congress Committees and office-bearers whose duty it was to give effect to them, there would be an end to all discipline and the Congress organisation would be disrupted. In spite of the clear and specific direction of the Congress President that any participation in such demonstrations by office-bearers and Congress Committees would be regarded as a breach of discipline, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose went on with his plan of protest in defiance of the explicit direction of the Congress President though he was himself the head of Bengal P. C. C. This created an extraordinary situation. The President wrote to Shri Subhas Chandra Bose explaining how he regarded his action in organising protest meetings as not only destructive of all discipline but fraught with the gravest consequences for the future of the Congress organisation. This had no effect. Meetings and demonstrations consisting of some congressmen and many non-congressmen were held in several places with varying success. In Bengal the Executive Council of the Provincial Congress Committee organised demonstrations in Calcutta and several of its prominent members and office-bearers participated in them.

The Working Committee which met at Wardha from August 9 to 12, 1939 considered the situation and the action of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose and others. They had before them the explanation of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. He argued that it was his constitutional right to give expression to his view regarding any resolution passed by the A. I. C. C. Denial of this constitutional right was, he maintained, tantamount to suppression of civil liberty within the Congress. If the explanation was not considered satisfactory by the Working Committee, Shri Subhas Chandra Bose took full responsibility for the demonstrations and expressed readiness to face any disciplinary action taken against him, cheerfully. The Working Committee considered the situation and the explanation. It came to the conclusion that in his explanation Shri Subhas Bose had wholly missed the main point which was that as an ex-President of the Congress and as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee he should have realised that after having received instructions from the President it was his clear duty as a servant of the nation to obey them implicitly even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him to appeal afterwards if he so desired to the A. I. C. C. or open session. If Subhas Babu's contention that every member is free to interpret the Congress Constitution prevails and if every member were to act on that interpretation, contrary to the decision of the President, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress.

The Working Committee therefore came to the painful conclusion that it would fail in its duty if it condoned the open and deliberate breach of discipline by Subhas Babu. It therefore decided that for the grave act of indiscipline, Shri Subhas Babu be declared disqualified as President of the Bengal P. C. C. and to be a member of any elective Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939. The Committee however did not take any action against the executive council of the B. P. C. C. or the individual Congressmen. The Working Committee left it to the P. C. C. to take such action as they thought necessary against offending members under their respective jurisdiction if they did not express regret for their indiscipline.

#### NATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

A brief account of the functions and work of the National Planning Committee was given in last year's report. The first meeting of the Committee which was held in December 1938 drafted an elaborate questionnaire, which was sent to various Governments, public bodies, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions and individuals. The second meeting took place in Bombay from 4th to 17th June, 1939. As originally conceived the Planning Committee was supposed to do a certain amount of preliminary work as preparatory to more comprehensive investigations by the larger body—the National Planning Commission. But as it proceeded it found that it had to do its work more thoroughly and on a more comprehensive basis. A mere superficial survey of the industrial situation in the country would be of no useful guidance to the country or the Planning Commission to be appointed

later. It was therefore decided to enlarge the scope of work of the Planning Committee. It appointed 27 sub-committees to consider each individual problem, and each sector of the National plan separately. The 27 sub-committees were divided under seven main heads, namely: (i) agriculture, (ii) industries, (iii) demographic relations, (iv) transport and communication, (v) commerce and finance, (vi) public welfare and (vii) education.

Experts were invited to serve on these committees. The committee adopted instructions for the guidance of the various sub-committees. The fundamental aim to be kept in view by all sub-committees, it directed, was to ensure an adequate standard of living for the masses. An adequate standard of living implies a certain irreducible minimum plus a progressive scale of comfort. The average annual income per capita in India is placed at Rs. 65/-. This is the most optimistic calculation. It includes the rich and poor. The town dweller and the villager cannot be more than Rs. 25/- to 30/- per annum per capita. This implies not only a considerable deficit in food supply but also in the other essential requirements of human existence. The national income must therefore be increased greatly during the next ten years to ensure an irreducible minimum standard for everybody. In order to secure this minimum standard not only will it be necessary to increase production but also to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth.

A really progressive standard of life will necessitate the increase of the national wealth five or six times. But for the present the minimum standard which can and should be reached is an increase of national wealth of between two and three times within the next ten years. It is with this object in view that the planning should be done now.

The Planning Committee as it proceeded with its work, received cooperation from various individuals and organisations. All the Provincial Governments are cooperating with it. The Committee has also received the active cooperation of important States like Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Bhopal, Travancore and Cochin. It has a well-staffed secretariat. Prof. K. T. Shah has been appointed Honorary General Secretary. A sum of Rs. 50,000/- has been sanctioned for the Committee's expenses. The work of the various committees is near completion. The Chairman has asked for the report of the various committees by the end of February.

#### WAR CRISIS

The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war were clearly laid down by the Congress in its resolutions passed from time to time. It had repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism with all their cruel implications. It had expressed in unmistakable terms its sympathy with all those countries which were from time to time made the victims of unprovoked aggression. It expressed its solidarity with the democratic forces in Spain. It protested against the conquest and annexation of Czechoslovakia. As a natural corollary the Congress dissociated itself entirely from the foreign policy of the British Government which was considered responsible for these tragedies.

The Congress had further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people and any attempt by an outside authority to impose its decision on India or exploit Indian resources for the purposes of war would be resisted. But the British Government paid no heed to these repeated declarations and warnings of the Congress. The attempt to amend the Government of India Act in order to narrow and limit still further the powers of the provincial governments in the event of war emergency arising, the despatch of Indian troops towards Aden and some months later to Singapore and Aden without the consent of the Central Legislature unmistakably showed Britain's desire to entangle India in a future war. To make their dissociation from these measures and to give effect to the policy of the Congress the Working Committee at its meeting at Wardha in August last called upon Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly. The provincial Governments were directed not to assist in any way the war preparation of the British Government which were on foot.

As soon as war broke out in Europe in the first week of September, India was declared a belligerent country on the side of Allies by the British Government. This declaration was made without consulting the people of India. Ordinances strictly curtailing civil liberties were passed. The Government of India Act was amended greatly restricting the already limited powers of the Provincial Governments.

The sympathies of the country generally were with the victims of aggression and against Germany and the fascist ideology guiding it. But sympathy did not necessarily mean India's entanglement in war and that too without her consent. What should be India's attitude in the crisis was a question pre-eminently for the Indian people to decide. But Imperialism thought and acted otherwise. The Indian people however were in no mood to acquiesce in this imposition and the Government knew it. The Viceroy, therefore, soon after their declaration of war called Mahatma Gandhi for an interview to explain to him the situation and enlist his moral support and through him that of the Congress and the country. Gandhiji took the public into confidence about what happened at the interview. He said he had made it clear to the Viceroy that in whatever he said he did not represent the Congress or the national mind. As a humanitarian he was greatly stirred by the war. Though his sympathies were with the Allies he did not want the destruction of any people. He was not at the time thinking of India's deliverance. What would Indian freedom be worth, if Britain was destroyed or Germany humiliated ! His own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian view point.

The Working Committee however soon met at Wardha, and considered the situation. Having regard to the gravity of the issues involved, the President invited Shris Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Narendra Deo, Jayprakash Narain and Aney to assist the Working Committee in shaping their decision. Mr. M. A. Jinnah was also telegraphically invited to attend and give the Committee the benefit of his advice. He, however, declined the invitation owing to previous engagements. After mature deliberations the Working Committee issued a comprehensive statement defining the Congress position.

The statement reiterated the principles laid down by the Congress from time to time for guiding the nation in the event of war. It said that India was declared a belligerent country and measures were taken affecting the country virtually in defiance of the declared wishes of the people. The Working Committee took the gravest view of these developments. While it unhesitatingly condemned the latest aggression of the Nazi Government and sympathised with those who resisted it, its cooperation could not be had by compulsion and imposition. Cooperation must be between equals and by mutual consent for a cause which both consider worthy.

The Committee were aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France had declared that they were fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. During the war of 1914-18 also the declared war-aims were the preservation of democracy, self determination and the freedom of small nations and yet the very Governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret pacts embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire, if the war is to defend the status quo, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee were convinced that the interests of Indian democracy did not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there was an inherent conflict between democracy in India or elsewhere and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation.

The Working Committee therefore invited the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged and in particular how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people ? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration however is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

The statement was forwarded to the Viceroy for his information and that of the British Government. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru was nominated to the Working Committee and a War Sub-Committee consisting of Pandit Jawaharlal (Chairman), Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was formed to deal with the situation as it may develop from time to time.

Gandhiji in a statement to the press commended the manifesto of the Working Committee to the unanimous support of the country. He hoped that all the political parties and all communities would join the Committee's demand for a clear declaration of their policy by the British Government with such corresponding action as is possible amidst martial conditions. "All that was required was a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen i.e., honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made on the eve of the war, and still being repeated from British platforms. The Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. The Congress has no soldiers to offer."

The statement was widely appreciated in the country as a statesmanlike document. It received publicity in foreign countries, especially America and Germany. The people of the oppressed nationalities adopted the manifesto as their own. The British Government in England, however, and a considerable section of the British press took care to give it the minimum possible publicity. But the more advanced section of the British opinion welcomed the document and warmly supported the Congress demand for declaration of war aims and peace aims of Great Britain.

The British Government and its agents here could not possibly ignore this challenge of the Congress. Some answer had to be given. The Viceroy had recourse to interviews.

The Viceroy had interviews with the Congress President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru jointly and also with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahatma Gandhi. He also met Mr. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League. These interviews however were not confined to the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League but included all sorts of persons and parties. He had as many as 52 interviews before he could frame an answer to the simple and straightforward question the Congress had asked.

Considering the gravity and magnitude of the crisis facing the country it was felt necessary that a special meeting of the A.I.C.C. be called to consider the manifesto issued by the Working Committee. A meeting was called accordingly at Wardha on October 9 and 10. The A.I.C.C. passed a resolution endorsing the statement of the Working Committee and authorising the Working Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to it. The Committee repeated its condemnation of Fascism and Nazi aggression and expressed its conviction that peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. It declared that "Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of all minorities to which the Congress has always pledged itself." In particular India must be declared an independent nation, and at present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent. The A.I.C.C. earnestly trusted that this declaration will be made by the British Government in any statement that it may make in regard to its war and peace aims.

The Viceroy, before answering the specific questions in the Working Committee statement referred to the "so many different points of view revealed, marked differences of outlook, markedly different demands, and markedly different solutions, for the problems that lie before us."

The declaration then sought to throw some light on the following matters: (i) objectives of His Majesty's Government in the war; (ii) intention of the British Government with regard to the future of India and (iii) closer association of the Indian opinion with the prosecution of the war.

(i)—As to the objectives of the war, the Viceroy while ruling out of question a precise definition of war aims and peace aims in the changing situation of the world, referred to the general aims as declared by the Prime Minister: "We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves...We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace; but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threats." Where did India come in all this?

(ii)—For the second question, the question of India's future, the Viceroy referred to the preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919. As a generous

step to this goal "His Majesty's Government recognise that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future Federal Government of India, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate.....At the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India, and with the Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and cooperation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable."

(iii)—As for India's active association with the prosecution of the war, the Viceroy suggested the establishment of a Consultative Group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor General would himself preside which would be summoned at his invitation and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of war and with questions relating to war activities.

The Declaration was so complete a denial of all that the Working Committee asked for and hoped for in their statement that Gandhiji was constrained to declare: "the Congress had asked for bread and was given a stone." It was condemned by even non-Congress circles as lacking in understanding and imagination. It looked as if the 52 interviews had been arranged with a view to emphasising differences.

The Working Committee which met at Wardha on October 22, considered the Viceregal declaration. They passed a resolution recording their opinion that the Viceregal statement was wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment among all those who were anxious to gain and are intent upon gaining India's independence. The Committee regarded the mention of internal differences as a screen to hide the true intention of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of war aims as a test of British bonafides regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposition parties and groups. "The Congress had always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities. The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community but for the nation and for all communities in India that go to build that nation. In the circumstances, the Congress cannot possibly give any support to Great Britain for it would amount to an endorsement of the imperialist policy which the Congress has always sought to end. As a first step in this direction the Committee call upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations."

The Committee also appealed to the nation to end all internal controversies in the hour of a grave crisis and act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom. It called upon all Congress Committees and Congressmen to be prepared for all eventualities.

Soon the Congress Ministers resigned. Their resignation changed the political situation in the country. It proclaimed the dissociation of political India from the imperialistic policies of Great Britain specially with the war that was going on in Europe. It was a big step towards non-cooperation. India withdrew her conditional moral support from the struggle Britain was waging against Hitler. The provincial part of the Government of India Act—the Federal part was still-born—was now dead beyond possibility of resurrection.

The resignation of the ministries demonstrated to all those who had any doubts that Congress was not out for power and office but for the emancipation of the people of India from foreign yoke. The ministries had done good work. Several reforms measures for the amelioration of the condition of the masses were pending before provincial assemblies. With their resignation these measures had little chance of being enacted. There was also the danger of the good already done being undone. But the Congress rose to its revolutionary height. It refused to allow small ameliorative reforms to stand in the way of the march of the country to its goal of Purna Swaraj.

The situation created by the resolution of the Working Committee and the resignation of the Congress ministries was not such as could be relished by the British Government. A sullen, discontented, rebel India was poor propaganda against Hitler. It reduced to mockery all the fine phrases about peace and democracy used by British statesmen.

To retrieve the position the Secretary of State for India and Sir Samuel Hoare spoke in the House of Parliament. They employed sweeter language but in effect said the same things that had been badly said by the Viceroy. As a result of these statements the Viceroy called Gandhiji, the Congress President and Mr. Jinnah for a joint interview. He told the visitors that he was prepared to modify

his previous statement to the extent that instead of an advisory committee for the conduct of war, his Government were prepared to expand the Executive Council of the Viceroy and find in it place for some popular leaders, on condition that the Congress would come to an agreement with Mr. Jinnah not only about the proposed changes in the Central Executive but also about the Government in the Provinces. Babu Rajendra Prasad, on behalf of the Congress, made it clear to the Viceroy that it was not possible for Congress to cooperate unless the policy of the British Government was made clear on the lines suggested by the Congress. He added "It has pained us to find the communal question dragged in this connection. It has clouded the issue. It has been repeatedly said on behalf of the Congress that it is our earnest desire to settle the points of communal controversy by agreement and we propose to continue our efforts to this end. But I would point out that this question does not in any respect come in the way of a declaration of Indian freedom as suggested above."

The deadlock therefore continued. The Working Committee which met in Allahabad on November, 19 to 23, 1939 approved of and endorsed the reply of the Congress President to the Viceroy. It said "The Congress has looked upon the War crisis and the problem it raises as essentially a moral issue and has not sought to profit by it any spirit of bargaining." The Committee declared again that the recognition of Indian independence and of the right of her people to frame their constitution through a Constituent Assembly was essential in order to remove the taint of imperialism from Britain's policy and to enable the Congress to consider further co-operation. "The Assembly could frame a constitution in which the rights of accepted minorities would be protected to their satisfaction and in the event of some matters relating to minority rights not being mutually agreed to, they can be referred to arbitration." The Constituent Assembly should be elected on the basis of adult suffrage, existing separate electorates being retained for such minorities as desired them. The number of members in the Assembly should reflect the numerical strength of the country. The answer to this demand had been entirely unsatisfactory. The plea of communal differences advanced in justification of this refusal was only an attempt to begot the moral issue. The minorities did not oppose India's right to freedom and Independence. As for the Indian Princes, they were the creation of the Paramount Power and identical with it. It is the people of the Indian States which should have a determining voice in the shaping of a free India.

The policy of non-co-operation was therefore to continue and must continue until the British Government revised its policy and accepted the Congress contention. But "it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with the opponent." The Working Committee therefore kept the door open and affirmed that all attempts to coerce the people of India along paths which were not of their choice would be resisted non-violently.

The Working Committee expressed gratification "at the readiness exhibited by Congressmen for the launching of Civil Disobedience, should this become necessary". But Civil Disobedience required perfect discipline. Also a non-violent army must be possessed of the essentials of non-violence. The true test of preparedness lay in Congressmen carrying out the constructive programme especially spinning and promoting the cause of Khadi to the exclusion of Mill cloth, promoting communal harmony by personal acts of service and the uplift of Harijans.

#### COMMUNAL PROBLEM

Efforts made in 1938 to solve the Hindu Muslim problem—the voluminous correspondence that passed between Pandit Nehru with Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, the subsequent talks between the latter on the one hand and Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose on the other—proved abortive. Mr. Jinnah insisted that an essential precondition to any agreement between the two organisations was the recognition by the Congress that the Muslim League was the sole, authoritative and representative political organisation of the Mussalmans of India. The Congress on the other hand was the representative organisation of the Hindus and was to negotiate with the League on their behalf. Such a position is not true to facts and Congress could not accept it, forgetting its own national character and repudiating its past history and the warring Muslims within the Congress fold and several Muslim organisations, representative of large sections among Muslims, as the Shias and the Momins, who repudiate the leadership of the League.

In their resolutions, on the platform, and in the press, the Muslim League carried on a regular propaganda against the Congress, especially the Congress Government in the 8 Provinces. The latter were accused of a set design to establish Hindu Raj and crush the culture and religion of the Mussalmans of India and annihilate their political and economic rights. The accusers were repeatedly challenged to produce instances of the Communal tyranny and domination. Vague and indefinite allegations, one-sided stories, distortions and exaggerations were the only answer given to this challenge. Singing of *Vande Mataram*, flying of the national flag on public institutions, popularisation of Hindustani and such like activities were instanced as attempts to crush Muslim culture. These activities were nothing new. The national flag had over since 1920, been the symbol of national solidarity and opposition to foreign rule. It was not in opposition to Islam. *Vande Mataram* had come to be the national song by historical associations since the early years of the present century and had been in vogue ever since the partition. The Muslim agitation against it was a new phenomenon. Here too the Congress authorised only that proportion of it to be sung to which no possible objection could be raised. The common language, the Congress advocated, was Hindustani as popularly spoken in Northern India and written either in the Nagri or the Urdu script. All these activities were old but the League opposition to them was new. Yet everywhere, where there was opposition, Congressmen and Congress Governments avoided conflict.

The Council of the Muslim League appointed a special Committee to collect all such and other vague charges against the Congress Government. A report was produced popularly known as the Pirpur report. Shortly afterwards Shri Vallabhbhai Patel, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee directed the Congress Ministries to enquire into each allegation and submit a report. The Congress Governments issued communiques giving detailed replies to these charges proving their baselessness. But despite the denials there was no abatement in the Muslim League propaganda. The incessant circulation of vague and disproved charges of a very serious nature roused passions and embittered relations between the two Communities.

The declaration of War in Europe in September and the crisis arising therefrom in India, served to lend increased importance to the communal problem and bring it into special prominence in political discussions relating to war-issues. It was recognised by Congress leaders that in a crisis like the present it was essential that India should present a united front and compose all her internal differences. To this end the Working Committee which met at Wardha in September last to consider the situation, telegraphically invited Mr. M. A. Jinnah to join in the discussions and help to evolve an agreed decision on the critical situation facing the country. Mr. Jinnah however could not come.

The Working Committee of the Muslim League which met in Delhi a little after, passed a resolution on the War-crisis which repeated the charges against Congress Government in the provinces. It was stated that autonomy in these Provinces had resulted in the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minorities whose life and liberty, property and honour were being assailed every day. Babu Rajendra Prasad, the President, wrote to Mr. Jinnah that these charges were wholly unfounded and based on one-sided reports that might have reached the League. The Governments concerned had carefully gone into these allegations and denied them. If the charges were persisted in, it was but fair that they should be inquired into and either substantiated or disproved. The Congress President suggested that if he (Mr. M. A. Jinnah) agreed, Sir M. Gwyer, Chief Justice of Federal Court might be requested to go into the matter. In the event of his not being available some other person of similar standing might be approached. To this Mr. Jinnah replied that he had placed the whole case before the Viceroy and had requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces had been expressly charged under the Constitution with the responsibility of protecting the rights and the interests of the minorities.

There was no indication that the Viceroy was contemplating an enquiry in the charges. The atmosphere of tension was however kept up through wide circulation of these unproved charges and the war-crisis was utilised by interested parties to further accentuate the situation. We have dealt elsewhere in this report with the war-crisis. The crisis as it affected India was political and the war-aims which the Working Committee called upon the British Government to declare, had nothing to do with the communal problem. The British Government however was

not slow to take advantage of internal quarrels. To avoid this being done to the detriment of the country, Pandit Jawaharlal resumed personal contacts with Mr. Jinnah. The communal problem apart, the Working Committee was anxious to evolve a common approach to the political issues connected with the war-crisis. Pt. Nehru's talks with Mr. Jinnah however did not lead to desired result. The communal problem was not discussed at all in these talks. Mr. Jinnah wanted to postpone it for a later date in Bombay. Pandit Nehru expressed his readiness to resume talks whenever it suited Mr. Jinnah.

It was expected that with the resignation of Congress Ministries the communal tension would decrease and favourable atmosphere created for efforts to compose all international differences. The resolution passed by the Working Committee emphasised that the freedom that the Congress contemplated for the country included the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities to which the Congress had always pledged itself. They also emphasised that the easiest method of arriving at a solution of the communal problem was provided by demand for a Constituent Assembly. It would represent the various parties and interests in the country according to their exact numerical strength and set at rest the otherwise interminable controversies with regard to the representative character of this or that organisation. Muslims would have representation on it to the full extent of their numerical strength in the country, through separate electorate, if they so desired. Seats may be reserved for other accepted minorities. It would be the special responsibility of the Constituent Assembly to frame safeguards to the satisfaction of the minorities. Matters whereon agreement was not possible would be referred to a previously agreed Tribunal. The settling of details was an easy matter if once the proposition that all communities desired independence, with a Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly, was accepted. This was the most democratic method conceivable in the circumstances for arriving at an agreed solution.

While the Congress was popularising the idea of the Constituent Assembly and the country was looking forward to the resumption of talks between Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. M. A. Jinnah, the latter sprang a surprise on the country in the shape of 'Deliverance Day' to be observed by the Mussalmans of India on Friday December 22, 1939. Mr. Jinnah appealed to the Mussalmans to observe this day as one of thanksgiving that the Congress Governments had at last ceased to function. Meetings were to be held to celebrate the 'Day of Deliverance' from 'tyranny', oppression and injustice during the last two and a half years when the Congress ministries, it was alleged, did their best to flout the Muslim opinion, to destroy Muslim culture, and interfered with their religious and social life and trampled upon their political and economic rights. While the ministries were condemned, the Governors were asked to inquire into the alleged charges and grant redress.

The 'Deliverance Day' coming as it did on the eve of Nehru-Jinnah talks and at a time when the country was passing through a serious political crisis took the country by surprise. Gandhiji in a statement to the press addressed an earnest appeal to Mr. Jinnah to call off the 'Deliverance Day'. Mr. Jinnah, argued Gandhiji, had taken upon his shoulders the tremendous responsibility of being both the accuser and the judge. On the one hand, the Governors were requested to examine the allegations and, on the other hand, the vast mass of Mussalmans were asked to cite the allegations before God as if they were proved facts and on that account to thank Almighty for deliverance. Would it not be right and proper to wait for the Governors' opinion before the Deliverance Day was observed? Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, in a statement to the press, repudiated the unfounded allegations made by Mr. Jinnah. He stated that when the Muslim League through the Pirpur Committee first made the charges against the Congress Ministries, he instructed them to inquire into each allegation and submit a report. These reports showed that the charges were entirely unfounded. Some months later, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, offered to submit the charges, if specified, to an independent tribunal for inquiry, but Mr. Jinnah spurned the offer, stating that he had placed the charges before the Viceroy. When Mr. Jinnah had repeated the charges, Sardar Vallabhbhai had instructed every Premier to invite his Governor's attention to them as they were also affected by the charges, and he was informed that the Governors considered the charges as unwarranted. He was therefore constrained to characterise the charges as wild, reckless and intended to endanger communal peace. The repetition of the unproved



charges was the more deplorable in that Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah were about to meet to explore the possibilities of a communal settlement.

The chorus of disapproval coming even from Muslims made Mr. Jinnah to change his position. He said that he had no quarrel with the Hindu Community. The Deliverance Day was to be observed by minorities who had all been oppressed by the Congress Governments. All along Congress had been identified by him with the Hindu Community, and Congress rule as Hindu rule. Mr. Jinnah by widening the scope of the Deliverance Day tacitly admitted that Congress, whatever it may be, is not a Hindu organisation. As a matter of fact if the Congress as a national organisation with a political and economic programme had not participated in the provincial elections there would have been only denominational representatives in the Assemblies. The Congress saved the country from this catastrophe.

The statement of Mr. Jinnah about the celebration of 'Deliverance Day' created an embarrassing situation for Pandit Jawaharlal who was to resume talks with him in Bombay. The statement revealed a wide gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League with regard to the vital political issues facing the country. Also the distrust of Mr. Jinnah was so deep as to make all unity talks useless. Pandit Jawaharlal wrote to Mr. Jinnah to this effect and asked if there was some common ground for discussions to yield fruit. Mr. Jinnah replied that no common ground was possible first "so long as the Congress is not prepared to treat the Muslim League as the authoritative and representative organisation of the Muslims of India", and second "that we, (the League,) cannot endorse the Congress demand for the declaration as laid down in the resolution of the Working Committee, confirmed by the All-India Congress Committee on October 10, 1939." The preliminary condition emphasised by Mr. Jinnah involved repudiation by the Congress of all those Muslims who are not in the League. "There were", replied Pandit Nehru, "a large number of Muslims in the Congress, who have been and are our closest colleagues. There are Muslim organisations like the Jamiat-ul Ulema, the All India Shia Conference, the Majlis-i-Ahram, the All India Momim Conference, etc., apart from trade unions which have many Muslims as their members. As a general rule, many of these organisations and individuals have adopted the same political platform as we have done in the Congress. We cannot possibly dissociate ourselves from them or disown them in any way".

In these circumstances and with this background the talks were dropped. As in 1938 so also now, it was not made known to the Congress what precisely the demands of the Muslim League were. The Communal problem remained enmeshed in the fog of irrelevant and impossible "conditions precedent."

#### BENGAL DISPUTE

We have in an earlier section of the report related the events leading to the disciplinary action taken against Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, the President of the Bengal P.O.C. We give here the history of the subsequent events in Bengal.

A requisition meeting was called on July 26, 1939 of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at which the then existing Executive Council was dissolved and a new Executive Council including office bearers was elected. Soon afterwards this Executive Council constituted an Election Tribunal for the Province. Complaints were received by the A. I. C. C. Office from several members of the old Executive that the requisition meeting of July 26, 1939 was invalid because (1) there was not sufficient notice for the meeting as required under the rules and the constitution of the Bengal P. O. C., (2) that the meeting and its proceedings were mala fide as they were meant to circumvent the constitution passed by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay regarding the formation of the Tribunal, (3) that the persons appointed as members of the Tribunal were not impartial and their appointment defeated the purpose of the constitution. The Working Committee which met at Wardha in August last went fully into the matter and authorised the President to review the whole case and write the judgment.

The President in his judgment reviewed in brief the sequence of events prior to the requisitioned meeting of the Bengal P. O. C. on July 26. Shri Subhas Chandra Bose was unanimously elected as the president of the Bengal P. O. C. as the result of a compromise on the part of the various groups within the P. O. C. According to the compromise the Bengal President was to nominate the executive council within a week of the meeting and in consultation with the group leaders. The president of the Bengal P. O. C. however made the nominations to the Executive out of time and without consulting the leaders of the minority groups. To this, objection was raised by the opposition leaders. In the meantime a fresh

dispute arose in connection with the appointment of the Election Tribunal, as provided for in the recently amended All India Constitution. The Working Committee had fixed July 31, 1939 as the last date for the appointment of the Provincial Tribunal. The A. I. C. C. Office and the President received complaints that although the constitution as amended in Bombay had come into force, Provincial and District Tribunals had not been constituted in Bengal to deal with the election disputes. Instead they were being dealt with in the old way. The President as also the General Secretary instructed the P. C. C. to appoint the Tribunal in conformity with the rules of the constitution as amended at Bombay and refer the election complaints to them. The appointment of the Provincial election Tribunal however required at least a three-fourths majority of the provincial executive. This majority was not available to the President in the Executive Council of Bengal P. C. C. It was therefore thought necessary to get over this difficulty by dissolving the old Executive and appointing a new Executive in which the necessary majority for the appointment of the Tribunal may be available. A meeting of the P. C. C. was requisitioned to elect a new Executive. The meeting as requisitioned was convened: a new executive consisting of the supporters of the President was elected. This executive appointed the Tribunal in terms of the amended constitution. The opposition alleged that the new Executive was not properly elected in as much as the requisition for the P. C. C. meeting was not signed by the requisite number of members, that notices were not duly received by several members and that seven days' clear notice was not given by post or published in the newspaper as required by the rules of the Provincial constitution. These allegations were found substantially correct. The following extract from the President's judgment sums up the case :

"When it is sought to dissolve the Executive Council which had been framed by the President under the authority of the Provincial Congress Committee, without assigning any reason in the notice and assigning different reasons according to the varying inclinations of requisitionists after it has been allowed to function in spite of protests, when the motive behind this move is at least open to suspicion and the dissolution and reconstitution of the Council result in excluding a number of members belonging to the minority group reducing them to much less than one-fourth and thus making the appointment of the Election Tribunal in accordance with the wishes of the majority without regard to the opinion of the minority possible, when the letter of requisition itself has no endorsement to show when it was presented and when its inspection was not available to members, it is necessary to scrutinise the whole thing carefully and insist upon a strict compliance with the rules of the Bengal P. C. C. This has not been done and the meeting of July 26, 1939 was invalid for want of sufficient and proper notice under the rules. Its proceedings are therefore declared null and void. The old Executive Council continues. The proceedings of the new Executive Council held on July 30 and the appointment of Election Tribunal are equally null and void.

A meeting of the Bengal P. C. C. held on August 30, 1939 reviewed the two decisions of the Working Committee—one relating to the disciplinary action which was taken against its president and another declaring null and void the proceedings of the meeting of the Bengal P. C. C. held on July 26, 1939 and the appointment of the Provincial Tribunal. The long resolution it passed about these two matters stated that "This Committee desires to make it clear that if it were to act in consonance with the opinion of the general public it should forthwith take the extreme step of defying the above two decisions of the Working Committee and such action would be enthusiastically received by the public of the province." The Committee also expressed its opinion on a variety of matters wholly unconnected with the points at issue. It questioned the validity of the Working Committee itself. It reaffirmed its faith in the Executive Council and the Election Tribunal declared null and void by the decision of the Working Committee. It hoped that "even at this stage the Working Committee will reconsider and rescind the above two decisions." It further resolved that "pending the final decision of the Working Committee the post of the President of the Bengal P. C. C. be kept vacant and all the business of the B. P. C. C. be transacted in consultation with Shri Subhas Chandra Bose."

The Working Committee which met at Wardha in September 1939 considered this resolution of the Bengal P. C. C. It noted with regret "that not only the tone and temper of the resolution but also its contents are objectionable in the extreme,

wholly unbecoming of a provincial committee in its relations to the Working Committee and such as would entitle this committee to take serious notice of them." The Committee decided that it saw no reason to revise its decisions which were taken solely in the interests of the Congress organisation. It therefore called upon the Bengal P. C. C. to give effect to the two resolutions of the Working Committee and elect a president for the P. C. C.

The Bengal P. C. C. having failed to appoint the Tribunal in terms of the Congress constitution, the duty of appointing one devolved on the Working Committee. The President proposed to the Secretary of Bengal P. C. C. that if he could suggest names to which all groups would be agreeable he would advise the Working Committee to nominate them as members of the Tribunal. The Secretary however could give no agreed list. The Working Committee was therefore constrained to appoint a tribunal in terms of the constitution consisting of the following members: (1) Shri Satishchandra Gupta, (2) Shri Kahlil Prasad Chatterjee, (3) Shri Priyaranjan Sen.

The Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at an emergent meeting adopted certain resolutions by which it again, in temperate language, condemned the decisions of the Working Committee about Bengal and demanded their reconsideration and withdrawal. In the meantime, complaints had been received by the President about the noncooperation of the B.P.C.C. officials with the Tribunal whose appointment had been disapproved of by the B. P. C. C. Executive in one of its resolutions. In particular, the President had directed the B. P. C. C. Secretary to carry out in the Rajshahi dispute the interim order of the Tribunal pending final disposal of the dispute by the Tribunal. The Executive had also been instructed to act up to the provision of their constitution requiring that all monies belonging to the B. P. C. C. be deposited in the bank in the name of the Treasurer of the B. P. C. C. These instructions had not been carried out.

The Working Committee considered the resolutions of the B. P. C. C. Executive and noted with regret "that the tone and temper of some these resolutions are highly objectionable and wholly unbecoming of a provincial committee in its relations to the Working Committee and to record the warning that if persisted in, the Working Committee will feel compelled to take notice of the same." The Working Committee also had received certain complaints regarding acts and omissions of the Bengal Provincial Executive. The Working Committee noted that the Bengal Executive Council had not been following sections 38 and 39 of the Bengal P. C. C. constitution requiring that all moneys realised for the Bengal P. C. C. shall be deposited in the Bank through the Treasurer and all withdrawals to be made by cheques issued under the joint signatures of the President or Secretary and the Treasurer and that the Secretary may keep with him up to Rs. 100/- as imprest cash. The Secretary of the Bengal P. C. C. was asked to submit without delay to the A.I.C.C. Office copies of the audit report for the year 1937 and 1938. The Working Committee also in compliance with the article XX (d) of the constitution deputed the auditors of the A. I. C. C. to audit the accounts of the Bengal P. C. C. for the years 1937-38 and 1939 up to October 31 and all other special funds connected with the B.P.C.C. and to submit their report before the next meeting of the Working Committee. The executive of the B. P. C. C. were directed to render full cooperation to the auditors.

The Working Committee further regretted that in spite of their resolution on the subject the Bengal Executive Council passed a resolution requesting the Leader of the Bengal Legislative Party to hand over the A. I. C. C. fund formed out of the contributions of the Congress legislators in Bengal to the B. P. C. C. The Working Committee requested the Leader of the Bengal Congress Legislative Party to transfer the amount of this fund to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

The Working Committee reaffirmed the appointment of the Election Tribunal for Bengal. It disapproved of the resolution of the Bengal Executive relating to the Tribunal which the Working Committee was compelled to appoint in terms of the Congress constitution. The persons constituting the Tribunal were, in the opinion of the Working Committee, not connected with any party and could deal with the disputes in a detached and impartial manner.

The Working Committee regretted the action of the Secretary of the Bengal P. C. C. in countermanning the interim order of the Provincial Election Tribunal and directing the subordinate Committees through the press to act in contravention of the orders of the Tribunal. The Committee called upon the Secretary to formally withdraw the same and publish the fact of such withdrawal in the press.

The Executive Council of the B.P.C.O. while it elected a new president of the B. P. C. O. on the advice of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose deplored the decision of the Working Committee regarding the Election Tribunal appointed by the Working Committee and expressed its complete want of confidence in it. The Secretary of the B. P. C. O. also failed to carry out the specific direction given to him about Rajshahi by the Working Committee. Unable to function in the absence of cooperation from the B. P. C. O. the members of the Tribunal tendered their resignations.

The Working Committee in its meeting deplored this state of things in Bengal, and said that the situation called for drastic action under Article XIII C (ii) but they refrained from such action in view of the approaching elections. But it was necessary to take steps to ensure fair elections. To this end the Working Committee appointed an ad hoc committee with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Chairman to make all necessary arrangements in connection with elections of delegates to the next Congress and Congress Committees in the province. The B.P.C.O. and others concerned were directed to give cooperation to the ad hoc committee.

The Working Committee requested the members of the Election Tribunal to withdraw their resignations.

The Working Committee considered the audit report submitted by Messrs. S. R. Batliboi & Co., Incorporated Accountants, Calcutta, appointed by them to go into the B. P. C. O. accounts. The auditors received but partial cooperation from the B. P. C. O. officials. From the facts as disclosed in the report, it appeared as the Working Committee resolution stated that the Secretary of the B. P. C. O. had failed to put its funds in a bank as he was bound to do. It was quite clear that the Secretary was not in a position to produce the whole or any part of the balance of the funds, admitted by him to be with him on that day and that a sum amounting to Rs. 10,371-3-7 was not produced nor banked by the Secretary up to December 13, 1939 on which date and long prior thereto the whole of that money ought to have been at least ready for production if not already banked. Besides this, the state of affairs as disclosed by the audit showed that books, papers and vouchers were not regularly kept.

The Working Committee considered this state of things to be extremely unsatisfactory. It was greatly detrimental to the prestige of the B. P. C. O. that a large cash balance which at the lowest computation came to over ten thousand rupees should remain unbanked and otherwise unaccounted for. The Committee desired the Secretary and Treasurer to take immediate steps to keep proper accounts and see that monies are disbursed in strict accordance with the rules of the B. P. C. O.

The Executive Council of the Bengal P. C. O. considered the resolution of the Working Committee appointing an ad hoc committee for conducting elections in Bengal. The Council characterised the appointment as "unconstitutional, ultra vires and exparte, besides being high-handed and unwarranted." The Council declined to accept the decision of the Working Committee and resolved to continue functioning in accordance with the constitution of the Congress and B. P. C. O. The Council also resolved as an emergency measure to place Rs. 10,000 in the hands of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to execute the present and future programme of the B. P. C. O. This grant practically exhausted the cash balance in the bank to the credit of the B. P. C. O. This amount consists of the provincial share of the proceeds of primary membership which should be and is ordinarily used by the new P. C. O.

The Secretary of the B. P. C. O. issued a circular to the district committees asking them not to recognize the ad hoc committee and continue to deal with the B. P. C. O.

The Bengal P. C. O. which met afterwards to consider the situation recorded its protest against the appointment of the ad hoc committee but at the same time "earnestly requested the Working Committee to reconsider their resolution and not to foist their unwanted ad hoc committee on Bengal congressmen. It however took no account of the resolution of its Executive Council refusing to accept the ad hoc committee and the Secretary's circular to all subordinate committees asking them to disobey the Working Committee resolution and not to cooperate with the ad hoc committee. On the other hand the resolution "recorded its full confidence in the present executive council, the President, Secretary and office-bearers" of the committee and requests them to deal with the situation as it arose." It requested its President and Shri Sarat Chandra Bose to represent its case at the next meeting of the Working Committee.

The Working Committee at their meeting considered the resolution of the B. P. C. C. and its Executive. It heard Shri Sarat Chandra Bose at length and decided not to alter its previous resolutions. The Executive Council of Bengal has since reiterated its determination to disregard and disobey the resolution of the Working Committee and has called upon the subordinate Committee not to cooperate with the ad hoc Election Committee. Elections are however being organised by the Committee and many districts and other committees are co-operating with the Election Committee. It is unfortunate that on account of this controversy and attitude of non-cooperation and defiance of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and its Executive Council, the elections could not be completed in time to enable the Bengal delegates to participate in the Presidential election. It is hoped, however, that the elections will be completed in time for the meetings of the All India Congress Committee on the eve of the Congress and that the delegates representing most of the districts will join the Congress.

It has been stated that the Election Tribunal appointed by the Working Committee had resigned. The Working Committee appointed another Tribunal in its place consisting of Shri Atul Chandra Gupta as Chairman and Shris Birendra Kumar De and Bhupendra Kumar Bose as members and they have been functioning since their appointment.

In spite of the clear and open defiance by the Executive Council, the Working Committee did not consider it necessary to take any further action in view of the forthcoming elections. However on February 27, the Council of the Bengal P. C. C. passed a resolution disaffiliating the Mymensingh, Hoogly and Jessore District Congress Committees for cooperation with the Bengal Congress Election Committee appointed by the Working Committee. This constituted not only defiance of the Working Committee orders but it was an incitement to all subordinate committees in Bengal to defy the instructions of a body superior in jurisdiction to the Bengal P. C. C. If the work of election had to go on smoothly, subordinate committees that were cooperating with the Election Committee needed protection. The Working Committee at their meeting of February 27 was therefore constrained to pass the following resolution :

"The Working Committee understand that the Bengal P. C. C. has passed a resolution purporting to disaffiliate the Mymensingh, Hoogly and the Jessore District Congress Committees on account of their cooperation with the Congress Election Committee appointed by the Working Committee by its resolution of December last. This resolution of the Executive Council of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, coming as it does after a series of acts of defiance of the Working Committee, leaves no room for any further condonation of their indiscipline. The Working Committee, therefore, calls upon the Bengal P. C. C. to show cause why it should not be disaffiliated under Article XIII of the Congress Constitution. The President is authorised after receiving such explanation as may be offered to take action thereon and, if satisfied, to pass orders withdrawing all recognition from the present Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and further authorises him to take such further action as may be necessary in consequence thereof for carrying on the Congress work in that province.

"The District Congress Committees of Mymensingh, Hooghly and Jessore and all other district committees in Bengal are hereby informed that all actions taken by the Bengal P. C. C. or its Executive Council for disaffiliating and otherwise interfering with their loyalty to the resolutions and directions of the Working Committee are null and void and shall have no effect.

"Pending final orders by the President after receipt of any explanation that the Bengal P. C. C. or its executive Council offers, the Bengal P. C. C. and its Executive Council are suspended and their powers shall be exercised by the afore-mentioned Election Committee."

#### INDIAN STATES

The year 1938 saw the rapid growth of political consciousness in Indian States. The movement for civil liberties and self-government spread over all the States, big and small. The princes naturally looked upon this with suspicion and hostility. They suppressed the movement with violence. In some States where the movement was too strong for suppression an attempt was made to come to terms. It was however soon discovered that this was only a device to gain time. The rulers in their effort to combat the reform movement, like their British masters, did not hesitate to foment communal passions. In some places as in Limbdi the extremist elements were encouraged to harass the reformers.

The enthusiasm in some States owing to the nature and the extent of repression could not be always confined to non-violent means. In a few places there was some violence. The leaders were new to the technique of satyagraha. Violence gave the authorities opportunity for severe repression. The people were not trained to the sacrifices necessary for a prolonged struggle. In smaller States, where the repression was most inhuman, the population was too small to keep up the fight for long. Help from outside could not do much. It was, therefore, felt that if the tempo of the movement was not regulated, there would be reaction and demoralisation. Gandhiji sensed the danger. He therefore advised suspension of civil disobedience in several States, and asked the people to concentrate on the constructive programme to prepare themselves better for a future fight.

The paramount power looked not only unconcerned while all this repression was going on, but rendered help by means of troops wherever the demand was made for them. It affords protection to the states without insisting upon justice being done to the people of the states. Whenever it is the question of its own interest and the prestige of its political department there is no hesitation to interfere. Rulers have been dethroned and exiled for reasons best known to the Political Department. The ostensible reason is misgovernment. But misgovernment only means failure to carry out the will of the political department or any of its officers. Real misgovernment is not the concern of the paramount power. It tolerates mediaeval barbarism. In British India the princes are used like minorities for frustrating Indian aspirations. They are one of the minorities and are the special charge of the paramount power. They were introduced in the proposed Federation to defeat the will of the Indian people to freedom. The federation has disappeared from the stage but the war has come in to fill the gap. The princes protest at the top of their voices their loyalty to the paramount power and their love for liberty and democracy. They have been vying with each other in the expression of their identification with the British empire. They have placed all their resources at the disposal of the crown. They are all in alliance with the so-called democratic powers and against Hitlerism which they claim to hate except in their own little territory. Neither the British Government nor the princes see the humour of the situation. Self interest, however it may laugh in private, keeps up appearances in public. The Viceroy goes about commending this loyalty as if it were the free expression of normal, healthy individuals who love things that are good and beautiful and hate injustice, tyranny and oppression. The princes are the creatures of the present order and they know they have no existence apart from it. With it they sink or swim. The paramount power recognises their utility as that of the minorities in India to show to a doubting world that India needs England and is behind it. They must have their reward. The power that keeps alive the tyranny of these princes stands self-condemned. However mistaken be the ideas of Hitler, he labours and works for what he wrongly considers to be the good of his people. For whose good does the princely order exist and whom does it represent, whom does it benefit? England by identifying itself with the cause of autocracy in the states only shows that in India it occupies the same position as the princes and therefore there is natural fraternisation. The princes are useful to Britain; Britain is useful to them.

We give below the course of events in some of the Indian States :

#### TRAVANCORE

Travancore is supposed to be one of the most advanced and progressive states in India. It has as its Dewan Sir P. O. Ramaswami Iyer, once a nationalist. And yet, the policy adopted by the Travancore Administration towards the movement for responsible government in the state has been reactionary in the extreme. In 1936 the State Congress was goaded into a campaign of civil resistance against a series of arbitrary orders issued by the Travancore Government prohibiting meetings of the State Congress within the State. One of these orders declared the entire organisation of the State Congress illegal. The movement of civil resistance gained momentum as time passed. Repression including firing on unarmed crowds was resorted to. About 600 people were put behind prison bars. The Government realised that the movement was too strong and widespread for suppression. The 600 prisoners were unconditionally released and some sort of civil liberty established. But the iron hand of repression was not long in appearing again. The State Congress was a thorn in the side of the bureaucratic administration. In 1938 civil resistance was renewed. A general round-up followed. Just when Travancore was

in the thick of the fight Gandhiji advised suspension. The Travancore Congress faithfully obeyed Gandhiji's advice. The halt was called to give the Diwan an opportunity to consider the situation created by his wrong policy and render justice to the State Congress. Correspondence was exchanged between the Diwan and the State Congress. The Diwan laid down impossible conditions for a settlement. All talk of responsible government was to cease and whatever constitutional reforms the Diwan might introduce must be preceded by an abandonment by the State Congress of any organised effort for responsible government.

When negotiations failed, the Congress resumed its constructive activities and the Diwan his repressive policy. The Diwan's wrath was visited on several newspapers in the State. There was a fall in the number of journals which catered for the education of the public. A series of measures were adopted for breaking the prestige and power of the State Congress. A deputation waited on Gandhiji to acquaint him with the worsening situation in Travancore and obtain his advice. On a study of all the facts Gandhiji found himself unable to resist the demand for a renewal of the struggle. He however laid down his indispensable conditions of non-violence and discipline. The people are preparing themselves for a further struggle. The Diwan is using the plea of war in Europe for perpetuating and accentuating the policy of repression.

#### MYSORE

The agreement arrived at in 1938 between the Diwan Sir Mirza Ismail and Vallabhbhai Patel and Kripalaniji proved an uneasy truce. Promises made were not kept by the administration. The order of deportation passed against two Mysoreans on the plea that they were not Mysoreans was not withdrawn. The prohibition order passed under section 144 Cr. P. C. forbidding the public from holding any meeting in the Town Hall maidan in Mysore was not only not withdrawn but renewed on expiry. The final blow to the pact came when the Government refused to accept a substitute nominee of the Congress for a seat on the Reforms Committee. The gentleman holding the seat on behalf of the Congress resigned the membership of the Congress and thus disentitled himself to represent the Congress. The Government however refused to fill this seat by another nominee of the Congress. No reason was given for the refusal. These arbitrary acts of the administration were significant of the new mentality governing it. The State Congress was in no mood to acquiesce. Before however resuming the struggle they wanted to explore all means of avoiding it. The Congress sought interviews with the Diwan but there was no response from the latter. There was no way of ending this stalemate except through a resumption of the struggle. Fresh efforts for a rapprochement were however directed to be made by the Working Committee of the State Congress before launching civil resistance. 1st September 1939 was fixed as the time limit after the expiry of which they would be free to take an aggressive line of action. 1st of September came without the least response from the Government. The fight was launched. The repressive machinery of the State is now working in full swing. Gandhiji has again advised suspension and his advice has been accepted.

#### JAIPUR

It will be recalled that Shri Jammalal Bajaj, member of the Jaipur Praja Mandal was arrested in February 1939 for defying an order prohibiting him from entry into Jaipur State. He was going there for famine relief and to preside over a meeting of the Praja Mandal which was not an illegal association. He was released in August after a harassing detention of more than six months. Soon after his release Jammalalji engaged himself in exploring possibilities of a satisfactory settlement between the Jaipur Durbar and the Jaipur Praja Mandal. The Praja Mandal had launched a campaign of civil resistance for winning not responsible government but elementary civil liberties,—the liberty to pursue constructive activities and peaceful educative propaganda among the masses with a view to preparing them for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja.

Shortly after the release of Shri Jammalalji the Public Meetings and Procession Regulation Act was repealed. This was but a small concession and fell short of the popular demand. It however indicated the willingness of authorities to end the tension and appease the people. Shri Jammalalji therefore had a series of interviews with the Maharaja and pressed the popular demand with his accustomed patience. The interviews yielded the desired settlement. The main terms of the settlement were (i) the release of political prisoners, (ii) the lifting of ban on all

newspapers (iii) satisfactory amendment of the Public Societies Act so as to render unnecessary for a society to get itself registered.

The settlement was welcomed in all quarters in Jaipur as a fitting result of the quiet and dignified struggle of the people for civil liberties.

The latest news from Jaipur is however disturbing. The Praja Mandal is asked by the authorities to get itself registered. This is manifestly contrary to the Durbar-Praja Mandal Agreement. Negotiations are afoot for averting this breach of the agreement.

#### HYDERABAD

Hyderabad is a state with the largest population and the largest revenue. It is also, next to Kashmir, the largest state in point of territory. But politically it is among the most backward and reactionary states. The state takes particular care to prevent the entry of undesirable outsiders into the state. Often the leading Indian papers are prohibited entry into the state territory.

The Arya Satyagrah which went on in Hyderabad for over a year had a successful ending. The Nizam Government conceded in substance the religious demands for which the Satyagrah was launched. The Satyagrah was withdrawn, but not before the satyagrahis had undergone the humiliations and miseries of a state jail. Several prisoners died in jail.

The Government also announced a scheme of so called 'reforms. The reforms are no advance over the existing system. The bulky report of the Reforms Committee has tried to prove the unsuitability of responsible and representative Government for the people of the State. The sovereignty, in other words the autocracy of the Nizam has been affirmed and reaffirmed and every effort to detract from its absolute character is discountenanced. To give the reforms however a 'progressive' appearance a scheme is formulated for establishing panchayats in villages. The crux of the problem in Hyderabad today is that of civil liberties. They find no place anywhere in the 'Reforms.' The ban on the Hyderabad State Congress still continues.

#### ORISSA

The Working Committee of Orissa Peoples Conference appointed a Committee of inquiry to go into the condition of affairs in various states in Orissa. The report submitted is a revealing document. The state of things disclosed is indescribably bad and is going from bad to worse. The princes of most of these states live a life of extravagance and self-indulgence. The liberty and property and life of their subjects are at their arbitrary disposal. The report details incredible tales of tyranny and vice. The princes with possibly one or two exceptions spend at least 50 per cent of the revenue on themselves, their family and their favourites. A considerable bulk of the remaining 50 per cent, if not the whole of it, is spent on persons employed for exacting taxes and practising extortions. Civil liberties are an unknown phenomenon. Public meetings are not permitted, newspapers are banned at will. Detentions without trial, summary punishment of inconvenient subjects, arbitrary confiscations of property, extortionate fines, beatings and torture are of frequent occurrence.

The people petitioned repeatedly to the agents of the paramount power from whom the doings of the princes are not concealed, for relief, but with little success. The power that nurses the petty states fails to provide protection to the poor and oppressed people. If their doings were known to an average Englishman, he would hang his head in shame for his country. But Imperialism knows neither shame nor humanity. In sheer desperation the people took to civil resistance with all its consequent woe and suffering. This was represented as active rebellion. British troops were called to assist the state forces in suppressing this rebellion. Several people were shot down in Dhenkanal, Gangpur and Ranpur. Unable to bear this repression a great exodus took place from these states. From 25 to 30 thousand people migrated into the province of Orissa. A demand supported by the British authority came from the rulers for the extradition of the leaders of the exodus. The Congress Government in Orissa refused to agree to this demand. At one time a ministerial crisis was threatened. But the ministry resisted to the last the pressure from the Governor. Gangpur was another tragedy. A peaceful crowd was fired upon resulting in a great number of deaths. The popular demand for an inquiry was refused. The President of the States People's Conference appointed a Committee of inquiry but the British agent refused permission to this Committee to enter the State concerned. The British officials promised redress and reform. But nothing has yet been done or is likely to be done.



## LIMBDI

Limbdi is a small state in Kathiawad. It has a population of 40,000 and an average annual revenue of Rs. 9,00,000. The incidence of taxation per capita in this state is Rs. 22.5, as against Rs. 6.5 for India. Every conceivable article of commerce is a state monopoly. The reader can imagine the oppression practised in imposing the monopolies on an impoverished peasantry. When repeated entreaties and representations for relief failed the people under the guidance of the Praja Mandal had recourse to civil resistance. This was suppressed with frightful repression. The peasants were hunted out of their homes. The merchant class which formed the backbone of the movement came in for special attention. Their houses were allowed to be burnt and their property looted. When their life was made unbearable they performed Hijrat. Some people weakened under this terrible steamroller of repression but others held on and are in exile.

To make a show of concession to the popular demand, some reforms are announced. They are an eye-wash.

What has been narrated here is true of other states also. Details vary but the main outline is the same everywhere. Kashmir, states in the Punjab, Rajputana, Kathiawad, Karnatak, Central India and Simla States all tell the same tale of people awakening to the sub-human conditions of their existence, and mustering courage to live healthier and more normal lives and the same tale of repression, woe and suffering.

The All India States Peoples Conference met this year at Ludhiana under the Presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was a great success. It took stock of political awakening in states big and small. It passed a number of resolutions covering various aspects of the states' problem. It welcomed the great awakening among the people of the states all over India and the progress made by them in their struggle for responsible government and establishment of civil liberty. It demanded the liquidation of the Indian states system. It expressed its appreciation of and gratitude to the National leaders, specially Mahatma Gandhi for the lead they had given in the struggles of the states people and the part they are taking in guiding these.

The Conference passed resolutions expressing its solidarity with the people in Kashmir Jammu, Rajkot, Mysore, Jaipur, Mewar and other states in their struggle for responsible government. It expressed its considered opinion that only those states which have a population exceeding 20 lakhs, or revenue exceeding 50 lakhs, could be units of a federated India. The rest of the states were to be suitably amalgamated.

It called upon the public workers to organise constructive work, particularly in the villages, such as spinning, weaving, prohibition, sanitation, communal unity, medical relief and literacy etc. and through these services to secure the confidence of the masses.

In view of this awakening and the Congress policy with regard to it, the Conference resolved that the struggle in Indian states should be co-ordinated with the wider struggle for Indian Independence. It authorised the Standing Committee to take steps to this end. The standing committee of the All-India State's Peoples Conference adopted a resolution at Wardha authorising Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Pattachil Sitaramayya to represent the States Standing Committee before the Working Committee of Congress.

## BENEFITS OF CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS

The Congress Ministries resigned in the first week of October for reasons set forth in another part of the report. They functioned altogether for two years and some months. We give here a brief statement in figures of the benefits that have accrued to the people through the various legislative and executive measures undertaken by them while in office.

These benefits were not confined to any particular community but were for the general mass of the people. In Bombay alone, the public, specially the poor, gained about seven crores annually from only 3 items, namely, prohibition, labour and land legislation. In addition to this the peasants gained about 40 crores owing to the Debt Redemption legislation. Other provinces show as great advantages accruing to the public from the policies followed by Congress Governments.

The figures given here are not exhaustive. They represent only a part of the benefits conferred by the Congress Governments. Their activities in the field of literacy, village uplift and social amelioration of the people have been as fruitful.

## MADRAS

Item	Cash value of the benefit per annum.
	Rs.
Prohibition (Loss to the Government Rs. 65,00,000)	2,60,00,000
Land Revenue Remission 1938-39.	71,40,00
Potentially estimated gain to Agricultural debtors.	
Debt relief (The Agriculturists Relief Act.)	50,00,00,000
Arrears written off under the Agricultural Debt Relief Act.	300,00,000
Harijan uplift :	
1937-38.	8,35,600
1938-39.	9,38,300
1939-40.	10,05,130

## BOMBAY

	Rs.
1. Prohibition : The Government losing Rs. 180,00,000.	5,00,00,000
2. As a result of the recommendations of the Textile Inquiry Committee adopted by the Congress Government.	95,00,000
3. Amendment of the land Revenue Code.	30,00,000
4. Debt Redemption bill.	30 to 40 crores of rupees (non-recurring).

## UNITED PROVINCES

Land Revenue : Remission in revenue,	
(1) to Landlords	3,57,00,000
(2) to Tentants	10,71,00,000
Remission of Stayed Arrears Act	9,00,00,000
Prohibition	1,00,00,000
Sugar Cane Control :	
(1) 1938-39	2,00,00,000
(2) 1939-40	6,00,00,000

## ORISSA

1. Orissa Tenancy Act. 4,00,000
2. The Madras Estates Land Act Amendment Bill (awaiting the Viceroy's assent). 10,00,000
3. Water rate in North Orissa under the Mahanadi system was reduced by 25 per cent as a permanent measure from 1938. The canal irrigation system is extended.
4. Grazing fee is reduced in all government forests by 50 per cent. New conveniences are made available in South Orissa.
5. Labour : The system of unpaid Labour and rased are abolished. The Orissa Money-lenders Act was passed by which, among other things, no money-lender could recover more than an equal amount of the principal as interest.
6. The Orissa Court fees Act was passed which reduces scales of court fees in South Orissa.
7. Prohibition of opium was introduced in the district of Balasore.

## ASSAM

1. The grant of from 25 per cent. to 31½ per cent remission in the land revenue assessment for 1938-39. 28,00,000 (non-recurring)
2. Flood Relief operations. 8,60,000
3. Education : An Educational grant of. 2,80,000
4. 1939-40 Remission. 42,00,000
4. Prohibition : Total prohibition of opium was introduced in Dibrugarh and Sibsagarh subdivisions from April 15, 1939. The experiment was welcomed with enthusiasm, many voluntary agencies sprang up to push forward the campaign. A large number of treatment centres and temporary hospitals were opened where the addicts were treated by trained doctors. About 10,000 registered and over 5000 unregistered addicts were cured of the opium habit. Loss of revenue from the sale of opium is estimated at Rs. 4,50,000 and the cost of the campaign at Rs. 1,00,000

## BIHAR

Item	Cash value of the benefit per annum. Rs.
Tenancy Legislation.	2,50,00,000
The Bihar Sugar Factories Control Act.	1,50,00,000
	(This year being an abnormal year, the peasantry will benefit to the extent of Rs. 2½ crores).
Prohibition. (Loss of Revenue Rs. 20 lakhs)	60,00,000
Debt legislation : Under the Bihar Money Lenders' Act maximum rates of interest have been fixed at 9 per cent p. a. in case of secured and 12 per cent p. a. in case of unsecured debts, subject to the proviso that in no case shall the interest paid exceed the principal.	

## CENTRAL PROVINCES

Relief in Land Taxes.	Rs. 11,87,170
Textile Labour.	5,00,000
Prohibition	
(The Govt. losing 9 lakhs).	27,00,000
Reduction in Grazing etc.	1,18,000
Irrigation rates.	2,00,000
Debt Conciliation up to March 1939.	5,83,00,000

## OBSERVANCE OF DAYS

A large number of 'Days' were observed during the year under report. The year began with the President Subhas Chandra Bose's appeal to observe 23rd April as anti-war Day. Meetings were held all over the country where resolutions were passed condemning the Amending Bill introduced in the British Parliament empowering the Central Government to act independently of the provincial Governments in the event of war emergency arising at any time, thus curtailing further the powers of the Provincial Governments. The resolutions also affirmed India's resolve to non-violently resist any attempt involving India in such a war or to exploit India's man-power or natural resources for war purposes.

The national week was observed throughout the country from April 6 to 13. Meetings, flag hoisting ceremonies, sale and hawking of Khadi formed as usual the principal features of the celebrations. April 13th was observed as the Jalianwala Bagh day.

May 21 was observed as the Political prisoners' Day throughout the country in response to the President's appeal. At meetings held, speeches were made urging the release of political prisoners, especially in Bengal and the Punjab.

The country celebrated Gandhiji's seventyfirst birthday with enthusiasm. A whole fortnight was devoted to the promotion of activities dear to Gandhiji, such as the propaganda and sale of Khadi. Large stocks of Khadi were disposed of. Public meetings were held everywhere and the significance of Gandhiji's life, message and philosophy were explained to the public and congratulatory resolutions passed.

January 26th was observed, as every year, as the Independence Day. This year's celebrations had a special significance. To the usual independence pledge was added constructive programme which the nation has to carry out preparatory to the struggle ahead. The Working Committee allowed all those who had any conscientious objection to pledge themselves to ply the charkha regularly, to refrain from repeating that part of the pledge.

The day, this year, was celebrated with special enthusiasm. It began with Parbat Pheries followed by flag hoisting and flag salutation. In the evening there were huge processions terminating in public meetings where the full implications of the day and the pledge were explained to the audience. After that the pledge was administered by the Chairman of the meeting. There was no interference on the part of the Government, and the day passed off peacefully. As usual members of all communities and classes participated in the celebrations. Our Muslim countrymen were as conspicuous by their presence as in other years in spite of the appeal of the League President to boycott the day.

# The National Liberal Federation

21st. Session—Allahabad—27th. to 29th. Dec. 1939

## The Welcome Address

The twenty-first session of the National Liberal Federation was held at Allahabad on the 27th. December 1939 and continued till the next two days under the presidency of Dr. R. P. Paranjpye. Pt. Iqbal Narain Gurtu, Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered the welcome address, in the course of which, he said :—

We are meeting this year at a time of great political crisis both national and international. Events are moving in Europe with such rapidity that it is difficult to foresee the further developments of the present troubles in other parts of the world. Our position in India is by no means free from anxiety and while we are not to take a panicky view of the situation we have at the same time not to be so over-confident as to consider ourselves absolutely safe and invulnerable.

Under the pressure of its left wing the Congress has formulated its recent demands in a manner which has created an unfortunate situation. The Congress is evidently going to continue its 'non-co-operation' in different degrees of intensity in future as the needs of the moment as understood by it may require, till its demands are fully conceded. There is no doubt that if the present condition of uncertainty and tension is allowed to continue long, it will lead to development which would neither facilitate the growth of ordered freedom in India nor would be helpful to Britain at a time when it is engaged in a life and death struggle. The policy of Great Britain in its relation to India in the vital matters of finance, trade and defence has not undergone any material change.

It is quite legitimate to enquire whether the declared aims and intentions of Great Britain relate only to Europe or whether India too has any place in the picture of the future which is to ensure 'the laying of a foundation of a better international system.' Assurances have no doubt been given in the Viceroy's Declaration and in the statements subsequently made on behalf of the British Government in Parliament that the goal of British policy is the attainment of Dominion Status by India of the same character as is enjoyed by the self-governing dominions and as is contemplated by the Statute of Westminster. But we all know how the assurances given on behalf of His Majesty's Government by Lord Halifax when he was Viceroy were sought to be explained away when the new Government of India Act was brought on the Statute Book. Our past experience since the time of the Charter Act of 1833 and the Proclamation of 1858 has taught us the painful lesson that, words of promise uttered to the ear can be conveniently broken to the heart. The prospect of Dominion Status at some indefinite future period cannot and will not satisfy any shade of public opinion in India to-day. The attainment of such status by India within a definite period and the framing of a constitution on a basis which will give it the substance of independence within that period is what India wants.

The condition laid down by the Viceroy that the communal differences in the provinces must be settled first before any advance can take place in the character of the Central Government, is open to serious objection. This is clearly a retrograde move as no such conditions were contemplated for the introduction of the scheme of Federation under the Act of 1935. Provincial autonomy with an irresponsible government at the Centre is an impossible position. A new strength must be given to it by transforming it into a responsible government, broadbased on the will of the people instead of using it as an instrument for imposing on the provinces the will of an unresponsive and irresponsible Executive.

The British Government must simultaneously make up its mind to revise its policy regarding the organization of Indian Defence. It has to give up its attitude of mistrust and undue caution. In matters of finance and trade also England has to make up its mind to have a new approach in its relation to India and to change its angle of vision completely.

The Congress wants to have a Constituent Assembly to be constituted on the basis of adult franchise to which only the 'accepted minorities' are to return their representatives in proportion to their numerical strength and from which the Indian

Princes and the Europeans are to be excluded. One cannot help pointing out that this is not a practical scheme in the present circumstances and an undue insistence on the method of constituting it and on the authority which is to be assigned to it will lead us into new difficulties the extent and magnitude of which the Congress leaders in their enthusiasm are apt to ignore.

From an analysis of the present condition of things in India, it would be clear that the idea of a Constituent Assembly with the powers demanded for it by the Congress is unworkable. But all honest effort in the direction of hammering out a constitution which would meet the greatest amount of agreement among the Indians themselves first should be welcomed by every patriotic Indian. The history of Australia and Canada shows that the final stage was preceded by a number of conventions and conferences held from time to time with a view to arriving at some satisfactory solution of their problems. The Government should convene a conference of public men elected by the Provincial and Central legislatures as also representatives of trade and labour interests elected by various Chambers of Commerce and Central Labour organisations. Rulers of important States or the ministers nominated by them together with other Princes elected by the Chamber of Princes may also be invited to this Conference along with certain elected representatives from the State legislatures wherever they are established. A certain proportion of members may also be nominated by the Viceroy to represent interests and views which may have been left unrepresented. The pooling together of Indian talent in some such manner for the purpose of framing a really progressive and acceptable constitution for India will well repay the trouble.

It is sad beyond words that an erstwhile Nationalist leader like Mr. Jinnah should have of late adopted an extremely truculent attitude. To fan the flame of communal bitterness is not only suicidal from the national standpoint but it is literally playing with fire. To such of our brethren in India who are still wedded to a communal approach towards national questions—whether they be Hindus, Muslims or others—let us say, 'Pause and think in what manner your common human interests and dignity can best be safeguarded.' No Indian of whatever caste or community can rise his head high with the brand of slavery on his head.

#### The Presidential Address

The following is the full text of the presidential address of Dr. R. P. Paranjpye :—

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.—I am deeply grateful to the reception committee and to my fellow-Liberals in the country for the honour they have done me in calling me to preside over the Federation a second time. I wish it had been possible to entrust this position to somebody more deserving than myself. I had the honour of presiding at our Lucknow session in 1924, and it is perhaps remarkable that the same individual is called again to preside at another session in the same province. Besides this I consider myself as, next to Maharashtra, belonging to this province, having spent six happy years in your midst. I hope therefore that you will graciously overlook my shortcomings and give me your cordial co-operation in conducting successfully the proceedings of this important Conference.

During the last year our party lost Sir Hormasji C. Dinshaw who joined our party at its very inception 21 years ago and was a great philanthropist and a staunch Liberal. We have also to mourn the loss of a member of our Council, Mr. B. S. Persha, a leader of the Komti community of Bombay, who was a member of our party since 1918, and Dr. Sir N. Choksey who was a distinguished Liberal and public worker of Bombay.

The late Kunwar Rajendra Singh was a liberal stalwart and a tower of strength to the party, especially in U. P. He was a Minister under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and resigned as a protest against the all-British personnel of the Simon Commission. His passing away is a great loss to our party and the province.

Further I cannot but refer to the great loss the whole country has sustained in the death of H. H. Sir Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda, a most capable and distinguished ruler who was looked up to not only by his own subjects but by all Indians as a trusted leader, keen on the all-sided progress of India.

The Liberals may be comparatively few in numbers, especially if we only take into account those who openly proclaim themselves as such, but I am convin-

ced that the Liberal point of view is shared by a very wide section of our countrymen and that we are the direct inheritors of the original political movement in India and are carrying the torch lighted by Dadabhai and Ranade, Pherozshah and Surendranath, Gokhale and Wacha, A. M. Bose and W. C. Bonnerjee, Hume and Wedderburn, Tayabjee and Telang and, shall say, even by Tilak and Malaviya.

The Liberals are the legitimate successors of the old Congress, and though for the last twenty years it has got into other hands and, casting off the well tried methods of old, sought new guides and followed new ways, we still firmly believe that our policy is ultimately more efficacious and will lead to abiding results.

We are painfully conscious that our policy does not make the same appeal to the common man as some other policies do. While we admit that we Liberals do not put the same energy into our political propaganda and should take a lesson in this respect from other parties, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that middle parties that can only appeal to reason, commonsense and experience are always apt to take a subordinate place in times of storm and stress. But we should not lose and realizing that in the broad stream of national life a few years are comparatively insignificant, and that sanity and statesmanship will ultimately prevail, carry on our work in the firm belief that we are the trustees of a glorious tradition and in full confidence that our work will surely bear fruit in the progress of our beloved country.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

When we met last year in Bombay, the international horizon appeared dark. The Anschluss of Austria and the Munich settlement dismembering Czechoslovakia had been accomplished, the Sino-Japanese 'incident' was still continuing, and the conflict in Spain was going decidedly in favour of Franco, though still not at an end. The anti-Commintern pact between Germany, Italy and Japan was the chief feature of the world situation. Germany under Hitler, after tearing up the Treaty of Versailles, was frantically re-arming, and England and France were increasing their armaments in self-defence. Poland which had helped herself to a slice of hapless Czechoslovakia, appeared to be one of the powerful countries of Europe, though it looked as if it was being gradually estranged from its alliance with France. Danzig continued to be an open sore. The League of Nations was gradually losing all its potentiality for successfully settling international disputes. Palestine was in great ferment owing to the violent conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. Abyssinia, though nominally conquered by Italy, was proving a hornet's nest, both militarily and economically. The persecution of the Jews was going merrily on in Germany and Austria, and Italy had begun to take a leaf from her totalitarian sister in this abomination. Russia, though hated and reviled by the dictators, appeared anxious to be recognized as a respectable member in the comity of nations, especially democratic nations, and democracies looked with sympathy and hopeful interest on the great economic and political experiment that was being carried out there. She professed strict adherence to the principles of international morality and sneered at the backwardness of democracies in carrying out sanctions against aggressor nations.

Soon after the beginning of the year the clouds got darker still. Hitler not satisfied with his professed, and to a certain extent ostensibly reasonable, objective gathering up all Germans under the Reich, swooped down upon Prague, and in one form or another incorporated Czechoslovakia into Germany. At last the democracies of England and France were roused to action. They gave undertakings to Poland, Roumania, Turkey and Greece to go to their help in case of attack by Germany and redoubled their work on rearmament. Poland, with Danzig as the spear attack, was the immediate object of Hitler's ambition. Everybody knew that effective help could not be given to Poland by England and France except with the co-operation of Russia. So what appeared to be belated and almost unwilling negotiations began with Russia. These were interminably protracted and at last came to nothing. In the meanwhile Russia, which had so far professed the most unexceptionally correct international principles had been secretly negotiating a pact with Germany, and as soon as it was signed Germany felt that it was no longer liable to attack on both fronts and therefore suddenly attacked Poland. England and France declared war against Germany in accordance with their undertaking, but without Russia they were unable to save Poland which was overrun within one month. Russia, perhaps to stop Germany occupying the whole of Poland, also overran that hapless country which was partitioned between the Nazi and Communist dictators. The part of the

Polish loot that Russia obtained almost without firing a shot has effectually prevented German access to Roumania and the Balkans. Russia did not rest content with this bloodless accession of territory. She began to exert pressure on Lithuania, Esthonia and Latvia which have for all practical purposes become Russian protectorates almost as the Indian States are of the Government of India. Not satisfied with this she began to try the same dodge with Finland, and this had led to serious military operations whose end cannot be in doubt but which has evoked the sympathy of the whole world towards her. Russia has thus practically become the most powerful power in the Baltic, and Germany appears to have lost more than she gained by her pact with Russia.

The war between Germany and the western democracies goes on for the moment at a snail's pace. One does not know how long this state of things will last. Any small incident may further extend the area of the conflict. India has for the moment been far from the centre of active operations, but dangers can very easily be conceived under some possible circumstances. Owing to the understanding between Russia and Germany, Italy is feeling disgruntled and is getting estranged from her recent partner in the Rome-Berlin axis. If Italy had stood by Germany, India would have immediately felt the effects owing to the Italian position on the Red Sea and the east coast of Africa. Even now if Russia and Germany decide to join forces and cooperate in active operations, a thing which is not out of the range of practical possibilities, India will immediately be in some danger on its north-west frontier. It would, however, be useless to speculate on a future which is so uncertain and which is constantly changing. Suffice it to say that India's comparative safety for the present and also its liability to danger in future are dependent on the British connection.

#### LESSONS FOR INDIA

I have dilated at some length on the international situation as, over and above its intrinsic importance and its possible repercussions on India, it has several lessons for all of us. To the extremists on the left who, at least till recently, took their cue directly or indirectly from Russia and dreamt of a communist regime in our country as the very antithesis of all imperialism, the sudden emergence of Russia as an imperialist power ready to trample on her weaker neighbours and to cast all ideas of international morality to the winds must have come as a great disappointment. There are of course some among them who still swear by the name of Russia and can see nothing wrong in any of her actions: but to most people Bolshevism Russia is now unmasked as Czarist Russia under a different name with only a greater power of doing evil. To the vast majority of Congressmen who have adopted independence as India's goal but who give only a lip service to the creed of non-violence it should be apparent that there is no place in these days for states that are fully prepared to defend themselves in all eventualities.

It should be obvious to them that comparative safety lies only in an intimate association with a large and powerful organisation like the British Commonwealth of Nations. Weakness and resulting non-violence will be no safeguard against nations that are out to grab as large portions of the world as they can. An independent India standing entirely alone on its own resources will inevitably fall a victim to some other power, be it Japan, Russia, Italy or Germany.

Finally, the present international situation must serve as a warning to the British Government also. For nearly a century Britain has followed a policy in regard to India which is mainly dictated by suspicion. Whatever basis there might have been for it immediately after the Mutiny, this policy has now been shown up as unstatesmanlike. If India had been properly organised for defence it would have had a tremendous weight on the international situation. Its vast man power and its almost infinite natural resources have not been utilised as they should have been. The present feverish activity appears like the attempts to begin to dig a well when the house is on fire. Any measures taken now will require some time to produce their effect. One would have thought that the experience of the last war would have taught a useful lesson to our rulers, but that lesson was soon forgotten, and the policy of 'divide and rule,' of keeping India weak so that it should 'always' require British support has been followed once again. May one hope that all sections of Indian and British opinion will, at least at this late hour, take a sane view of things and begin earnestly to prepare for a dangerous and uncertain future?

## RESIGNATION OF CONGRESS MINISTRIES

An immediate result of the war on India has been the suspension of democratic government in seven provinces and the taking over by the Governors of the administration of these provinces in their own hands. Whatever one may think about the way in which the Congress ministries have carried on the administration for 27 months—and I shall have something to say about it later—these resignations are to be regretted in every way. The whole position appears to have been grossly mismanaged both by the British Government and the Congress ministries. Government appear to have overlooked the fact that the India of 1939 is different from the India of 1914 and to assume that Indian self-respect will reconcile itself to any action that Government may independently take. While there would probably have been very little opposition from the Indian public to range India on the side of the democracies in opposition to Nazi Germany if Indian leaders and perhaps the Central Legislature had been consulted beforehand, Indians feel that they continue to be tied to the coattails of Britain and that their self-respect counts for naught with the authorities. Indians recognize that defence measures have to be taken in secrecy long beforehand but it should have been possible to secure that acquiescence of the leaders of Indian opinion in the central and even provincial legislatures before Indian troops were sent abroad to Egypt, Singapore and other places. With a genuine desire to consult and respect Indian opinion there would have been no difficulty in convincing the Indian public about the necessity of this move. Further when war was actually declared a secret session of the Central Legislature should have been immediately called to acquaint India with all aspects of the question, and India would have become a belligerent voluntarily instead on the mere fiat of the British Government. The various statements made later by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State could have been made then, though perhaps in a different tone and in more conciliatory phrases. Government should not have depended merely on the offers of help from Indian Princes—these are naturally to be expected as a matter of course—but should have done something to appeal to the heart of the Indian people.

But Government appears to have taken merely a formal and legalistic view of its position and immediately declared India a belligerent. This reading of the situation appears justified from a consideration of the declarations made by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru immediately on the declaration of war. But imagination is the last thing our Government possesses and a fine opportunity of winning the heart of India was allowed to slip.

## CONGRESS DEMAND FOR A DECLARATION

But, if Government did not show any imagination in dealing with the situation, I am afraid the Congress organization allowed itself to be rushed into a position from which escape is difficult. While the first thought of the Mahatma and the Pandit were statesmanlike and generous, all this changed when the working committee of the Congress was called to discuss the situation. The effects of mob psychology were immediately apparent in such a meeting. Instead of confining itself to the war situation it made a demand for an immediate declaration of the war aims so far as they related to India. Now it should have been obvious to everybody that such aims could only be laid down in general terms, and definite words or dates were impossible to announce while the war was just in its initial stages. Nobody can prophesy the actual situation at the end of the war. Government put forward, not only as a mere debating point but as a real difficulty, the existence of communal tension as the main obstacle in the way of giving a categorical undertaking. The Congress should not have laid itself open to such a retort or made such a fanciful or impracticable demand as the convocation of a constituent assembly. It should have addressed itself to the task of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity and not indulged in a wordy warfare with Mr. Jinnah by means of declarations, statements or articles in the *Harizan*, all of which have merely resulted in making the communal tension even greater. It should have taken Government at its word when it said that the aim of the British policy was the establishment of dominion status in India and replied somewhat as follows, 'You say that you wish to put India in the way of attaining full dominion status. We accept your statement at its full face value. But you know as well as we do that it involves full preparedness to defend ourselves. We see the grave external dangers facing India. What immediate steps are you going to take to make India self-sufficient in matters of defence? The acid test of your bonafides is a willingness to



help India in this matter. Take Indian public opinion into full confidence and lose not a moment in taking all necessary steps to organize the power of the country both in men and resources. Above all, therefore, change drastically your defence and external policy; cease to regard India with suspicion, give her your full confidence; treat her as an equal; take steps to Indianise the army; do not depend upon only a few classes for your defence forces but make the army, air force and navy broad-based on the whole of the Indian people; organize Indian industries on a firm footing irrespective of any temporary ill-effects on British industries; start new industries which are of basic national importance; encourage Indian shipping and do not thwart it in the interests of vested British capital. Also give up your conscious or sub-conscious dependence on the divisions among Indians for the continuance of British rule. Encourage the rulers of Indian States to introduce responsible government there in the same way as in British provinces. Do all these things and the whole of India will rally by to your side as one man.' If the Congress had taken some such line there would have been no chance for making debating points as are now being made on both sides. On the one hand such a practical attitude would have been appreciated by the people of England and the world in general, and India would have had the whole British people, who are broadly speaking, lovers of democratic freedom, on its side. On the other hand a programme like this when fully carried out would make India truly capable of *Swaraj*—call it independence or dominion status—and nobody would then be able to resist a demand for it. Instead of such a practical and straightforward statement of India's demands which everybody can understand and accept as reasonable, the Congress, as is its wont, continues to harp on vague phrases and meaningless formulae which, even if accepted, will lead in future to endless difficulties of interpretation and charges of bad faith on both sides.

#### VICE-ROY'S OFFER OF CHANGE AT THE CENTRE

In its insistence on words and formulae the Congress missed the possibility of making a great advance which could have been made without a great change in the Government of India Act. In his original statement the Viceroy offered to form a consultative committee, on which public opinion would be fully represented, to help in the prosecution of the war. The offer was so vague and so dependent on the personal predilections of the authorities that it was rightly rejected by all parties. In the succeeding discussion with Mr. Gandhi, however, this offer was considerably modified, and the Viceroy agreed to nominate certain public leaders to his Executive Council. This offer was also contemptuously rejected by the Congress. To me it appears that this was a great mistake. This suggestion could probably have been hammered into the form of a cabinet responsible to the legislature and a convention might have been established whereby if one of these new ministers in charge of any departments lost the confidence of the legislature he would have had to resign. At present one of the great defects of our transitional machinery of government is the irresponsible and irremovable personnel of the Central Government. For a legal and formal change in the Central Government in all its aspects much time and energy would have to be spent by Parliament to make the necessary alterations in the Government of India Act, a thing which would have been impossible at the present moment; hence an attempt should have been made to put the proposal of the Viceroy into an acceptable shape. It may not have given a very great deal but it cannot at the same time be considered altogether insignificant. It is the duty of practical men to take whatever is offered provided it is a part of an acceptable whole and use this part itself as a lever to get the remainder. The history of the British Cabinet system itself shows that it attained its present form by gradual and even imperceptible steps during a period of over a hundred years. This is not the first instance by any means when the Mahatma has by his absurd insistence on formal terms lost a golden opportunity of getting a valuable step forward in the path of India's progress.

#### A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The insistence on a constituent Assembly seems to be equally impolitic. The scheme can be riddled with objections and its discussion is likely to create further difficulties. It seems magnificent to call such an assembly elected on adult suffrage; but does one seriously think that the illiterate villager, who would form the vast portion of the electorate, is capable of pronouncing an opinion upon complicated matters like the machinery of the Government of a vast country like India?

Is it too uncharitable to say that Mr. Gandhi expects to carry the uneducated voter off his feet by means of a whirlwind campaign in which high-sounding words like truth, *ahimsa*, *Charkha*, *dharm*, untouchability reinforced, if need be, by the threat of a fast, would be used as slogans to give him a mandate to do what he likes? Is it not likely that such a campaign will lead to inter-communal riots unless there is previous understanding with the leaders of other parties? Already there have been several modifications of the original idea of the adult suffrage; minorities are to be given the right of separate election for the purpose of electing this assembly; the question of weightage has been left beautifully vague; the question of the representation of Indian states has been untouched; the way in which minorities of opinion that do not bow the knee at the Shreegan shrine are to be represented has been left unconsidered; and a vast number of other questions have been held over possibly to give a chance to the Mahatma's 'inner voice' to express itself. Several of these questions are to be first settled, according to Mr. Gandhi, by a consultation among the leaders of the various parties, or even by the award of the Government which it is intended to replace. If such an agreement is possible on these vital preliminary points in regard to the formation of the constituent assembly by a friendly discussion between the leaders or even through the benevolent intervention of Government itself, what objection can there be to such discussion on the whole question of our constitution itself? If the thing is possible in one connection it should be possible in another. I am reminded of the ambitious chemist who desired to discover a reagent which could dissolve every solid substance, but was nonplussed when asked by a plain man in what receptacle he was going to store this reagent. Is it too much to say that Mr. Gandhi is like this chemist who does not see such a practical objection to his ambitious scheme? The history of all constituent assemblies, whenever they appear to have succeeded, shows that the ground was first of all fully prepared by informal discussion among all leaders and by securing an almost complete preliminary unanimity, and then, if at all it was considered necessary, a formal cachet of approval was given to it by means of a constituent assembly if it could be convoked. Many such ambitious projects have on the other hand led to heated disputes that ended in nothing as at the time of the French Revolution.

I am inclined to think that a more appropriate course for our leaders would be to follow the path, which though it actually failed in the end, seemed to be so promising, and get together a small informal and manageable conference like that which drafted the Nehru report. Even Pandit Jawaharlal may condescend to take a leaf out of his father's book.

To me it appears to have been a tactical mistake on the part of the Congress to insist at this juncture on a formal declaration by Government about the future system of government in India with a veiled threat of non-cooperation. While I say this I am equally clear that Government of its own accord should have come out with an appeal and a declaration of policy which would have stirred the imagination of the Indian people and enlisted their heart, as I believe their head already was, on the side of the democracies which had taken up arms in defence of freedom and international order. Thus there has been a lamentable series of lost opportunities on both sides, and instead of cordial cooperation there has been interminable and fruitless discussion in a huckstering spirit. Everybody knows that at the end of the war everything will change and India cannot remain as it was. Even as a result of the last war there occurred developments, which, however disappointing and halting, did mean some improvement and could have led to much greater progress, if our leaders as well as Government had played the game in a spirit of mutual understanding. Now 20 years have revolutionized the whole outlook. Awakened India cannot be disregarded any more, and if it cheerfully and wholeheartedly ranges itself on the side of the allies, its future progress would have been assured. It is not too late even now. The allies are faced with a problem far more difficult than they were 25 years ago, and Indian support will count a deal both from the moral and material point of view. The outlook of the British has also materially altered, and there would have been very little opposition even from the die-hards of Britain to a radical change in India's constitution. I must notice another consequence of the different attitudes taken on the one hand by the Congress and on the other by Muslim leaders like Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq and by the Indian States. When after the war there is renewed consideration of the Indian problem, British statesmen will necessarily be impressed by this contrast, and at least unconsciously, their weight will be on the side of

those sections and against the large mass of nationalist India a very large proportion of whom are Hindus. Hindus already have had to make unreasonable concessions to those sections in the form of weightage and disproportionate representation in services and legislatures to secure their support; is it wise on their part to increase their own difficulties in future and make the achievement of a purely democratic India, in which caste and creed and class have no place, even more difficult than it need have been?

#### WORKING OF PROVINCIAL DEMOCRACY

Eight provincial Governments in which Congress had a big majority have been ruling their provinces for over two years and have now resigned. In seven of these provinces Governors have assumed full powers of Government, and in the remaining four provinces responsible democratic governments are still functioning. It is now time to take stock of the situation and examine the prospects of democracy in India. In the first place the fears entertained by the British die-hards about the transfer of law and order to popularly elected ministries have on the whole proved unfounded. Though there have been many complaints, some of them with a substratum of truth but most of them without any foundation, one can say in general that responsible government in the provinces has proved moderately successful. The Ministers have worked hard and done their best to carry out their programme, though signs of inordinate hurry, want of previous experience, and excessive anxiety to consolidate their own party rather than advance the interests of the country as a whole and conciliate minorities, have been but too evident. Policies have been followed and legislation has been enacted which have not produced all the effects desired. Occasionally there has been a tendency to ride roughshod over classes in which their opponents have predominance. In spite of high sounding phrases on their lips most of the ministries have not shown themselves to be better than the previous bureaucratic Governments in the distribution of patronage or to be above manipulating rules and regulations to get their own supporters out of tight corners. The old trick of appointing committees or commissions of investigation to get rid for the time being of unpleasant questions has been fully learnt. Many high sounding promises have been entirely forgotten or even explained away. Financial commitments have been made which it would be very difficult to meet in their entirety. Some of the minorities have been rubbed on the wrong side, and they feel so disgruntled that they are expressing their delight at the resignation of the ministries. Sectional, linguistic and class favouritism is not unknown. There has been a recrudescence of communal tension. With all these criticisms the single fact that the Governors have not felt themselves called upon to exercise their reserved powers owing to any serious invasion of the rights of minorities shows that the machine of provincial autonomy can work, even though creakily. There is reason to hope that if the elected legislatures and their responsible cabinets are allowed to work in full independence, unfettered by extraneous interference, democracy will be found to have a suitable soil in our country.

#### TOTALITARIAN TENDENCIES

The great danger to democracy in India appears to be the growing spirit of totalitarianism both in the Congress and the Muslim League.

In a true democracy the elected representatives must realise their responsibility to their electors, and the cabinet to the elected representatives. If by the interpolation of an extraneous authority the sense of this responsibility is deadened, democracy cannot be said to be stable whatever external facade it may have or by whatever name it may choose to call itself. The Congress ministries in the eight provinces could not by any stretch of imagination be called responsible to the members of their legislatures or the primary electors. They are the bond slaves of a small junta called the Parliamentary Committee and of the Mahatma who really controls all organisations of the Congress and whose word is law. The electors are only expected to vote once in five years for the candidates representing Congress and take part in periodical demonstrations for the greater glory of the Mahatma or any of his henchmen of greater or less importance. As for the Congress members of the legislatures 'there is not to question why, there is but to vote and lie' often to their own convictions. All this goes under the name of discipline which is said to be necessary in a time of war, even of a non-violent character. By the way this continued use of military language in the mouth of the apostle of ahimsa appears to me to be mere cant. I can appreciate a sense of discipline in any organised body of individuals, but it should be so expressed as

not to kill all sense of self-respect or independent judgment. I can understand the Congress laying down general lines of policy and comparing notes at intervals. But when it comes to one member of the Parliamentary Committee interfering in the choice of the personnel of the cabinets, or in the details of administrative or legislative measures, even, if rumour is not a lying jade, in matters of appointments great and small, in three or four provinces, we are no longer within the dominion of legitimate discipline but are dreadfully close to Fascism or Nazism. The last and the most important of the ten commandments of the Fascist militia is 'Mussolini is always right'; the Nazis are taught that 'Justice and Hitler's will are one and the same'. In the Congress organisation from the humblest primary member of a village Congress committee to the Premier of a province everybody has to regard the view of the Mahatma as sacrosanct. And this view may change as violently as you like. Thus the refusal in April 1937 to form ministries unless the Government gave an undertaking not to use their safeguarding powers, and the decision to form such ministries in July of the same year without obtaining such an undertaking, were both praised by the obedient Congressmen as the highest exhibition of statesmanship. The decision to fast at Rajkot and the decision to give up that fast a few days later without much having happened in the interval, both sent our patriots into ecstasies as supreme illustrations of Mahatmaic grandeur. The Latin poet held up a woman's heart as the perfect type of what is varying and changeable, but he obviously never came across a Mahatma in those primitive days! Seriously, this absurd veneration for the word of an individual, however eminent, is the absolute negation of the democratic ideal. We have in our country but too many of such deified men and the hosts of their misguided devotees; but they generally wear a religious garb. But democratic politics is a practical business based on history, reason and experience; it should not find a place for such supermen whether they are called a Duce, a Führer or a Mahatma. If at the present time we express sympathy for democracies fighting for freedom, we should take care that we ourselves are unwittingly heading for the abyss of totalitarianism which is its very antithesis.

What I have said about the totalitarian tendencies in the Congress applies in some measure to the Muslim League and some other organizations. Mr. Jinnah is claiming to be Muslim Mahatma whose word is law and who can take any decisions, like the recent decision to observe a day of thanksgiving at the recent resignation of Congress ministers without consulting his colleagues. He has not yet learnt all the tricks of Mahatmaship, but appears to be getting on. May one hope that the Muslims, with their long traditions of democratic equality, will not imitate this undesirable aspect of the Congress organization? What democracy wants are capable, farseeing and statesmanlike leaders, not a Leader with a capital 'L.'

#### HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION

The great obstacle in the way of India's reaching its political goal is the growing want of confidence between the Muslim League and the Congress. In spite of any alleged detailed charges I think everybody will admit that these cannot be serious and cannot generally be substantiated. Of course in any particular place small matters loom large, and continual repetition of such charges increases the irritation. If anybody is bent on finding causes for grouching he can always find them. But sensible leaders should take care not to attach an exaggerated importance to such matters and should try to smooth out such differences. But owing to the strained relations exactly the opposite course is being followed. On the side of the majority party there is too great an insistence on non-essentials which are being represented as matters of vital national concern. Thus the stress laid upon the Congress flag and the attempts to force it down upon all as a national flag leads to the Muslim League insisting upon its own flag. After all a flag is a mere symbol, and it should be a symbol of unity rather than of discord and I hope the recent declaration of the Mahatma that it should not be hoisted at any place if there is any objection to it will be strictly followed by all Congressmen. The same is the case with the Bande Mataram song, the Charkha and Khaddar and Gandhi cap. All these may be very good in their way but the attempts to force them down the throats of others even though they may be in a numerical minority, only help to accentuate the tension. When the larger and more vital questions have been satisfactorily settled and there is a general feeling of friendliness everywhere, it would not be very difficult to devise a national flag or to have a national anthem acceptable to all. I am not particularly attracted by a special party uniform

as it seems to be an imitation of the black or brown shirts of the Fascists and Nazis ; still I consider that a generally accepted national dress will add to the solidarity of the country, though this should evolve of itself rather than be specially invented and forced upon everybody. Similar remarks can be made about the Vidya Mandir scheme and other alleged causes of difference. The leaders should try to keep such matters in the background rather than bring them prominently forward. But unfortunately this is exactly what is often not being done.

The main cause of all this tension is however the *amour propre* of both sides. The Congress considers itself entitled to represent the whole nation including the muslims, while the Muslim League wants to be recognised as the only body representing the Muslims. To an observer who is in neither of these camps it seems that while there is some substratum of truth in both these claims they cannot be fully sustained. The Congress is undoubtedly the biggest and best organised political body in the country. But it cannot be considered as the sole representative of all sections. In spite of the presence in it of a few Muslims and in spite of various attempts at mass contact with them, one must admit the large body of Muslims do not regard it as representing themselves and do not consider their interests safe in its hands. This may be an unreasonable attitude on their part, but it is absurd to deny its existence. The landlords and capitalists have also not joined it in any large numbers. We Liberals also do not belong to it though we are always prepared to support many individual items in its programme. In spite of the praise-worthy efforts of the Mahatma for the uplift of the Harijans there is, I believe, a feeling among them that the sympathy of many Congressmen is only skin-deep, and it is undoubted that Dr. Ambedkar, their undisputed leader, has not identified himself with Congress activities like the Harijan Sevak Sangh intended for their advance. On the other hand the Kisan movement and the labour movement are undoubtedly critical of the aims and methods of the Congress, though they may not in all cases have formally separated from them. The Congress cannot entirely represent either the large body of progressive Hindu opinion represented by Mr. Savarkar, Bhai Parmanand and Dr. Moonje, or the large though comparatively silent body of Sanatani Hindus who sigh for the revival of ancient Hindu culture. I leave out of account the question of the attitude of the Indian States and their peoples, though any national political movement must include them in its purview. In view of all these facts the Congress cannot claim to be the sole representative of India, though it is the most important single political body in the country and though it can command huge majorities in many provinces, which perhaps is partly explained by the general existence of single-membered constituencies which tend to leave minorities unrepresented and also by the glamour attaching to Mr. Gandhi's name and personality.

#### THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

It is unnecessary to examine in the same detail the claim of the Muslim League. But in this case also it may be generally admitted that it is the most important organisation among the Muslims. Owing to the intense background of religion, dissidents among them are not so vocal as in the case of the Congress, though one can name the Shias, the Momins and others as at least indifferent to the League. It is probable also that many of the younger educated Muslims are not attracted to the League, partly because they are not fanatically religious and partly because they consider that a national movement must have a broader base than mere religion. There is also an appreciable number of nationalist Muslims whose leader is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, of Communist-minded Muslims who are attracted by Bolshevism, and of Muslim reformers who regard modern Turkey of Kamal Ataturk as an example to follow. It may be said in general terms that the claim of the Muslim League is as well or as ill-founded as the claim of the Congress. When there is any disinclination to accept these claims it is sound policy not to make them but to depend upon actual work and the intrinsic merit of their programmes for their tacit acceptance by all. But both bodies are now making these claims a matter of prestige, and when in any dispute prestige comes in, commonsense and sanity are sure to go out.

#### BROADENING CONGRESS CARBETS

How to solve this question of strained Hindu-Muslim relations is the question of the hour. The immediate causes of riots are wellknown ; cow-slaughter, music before mosques, conversion and other religious or quasi-religious matters can, I believe, be settled if there is a will to settle them on the part of the leaders,

The real cause is political in nature. Muslims feel that being in a minority they are likely to be oppressed by the majority community. This is really an absurd idea, as in political matters Hindus do not generally act unitedly as Hindus but are divided into many parties and sections, first on the score of political and economic differences of outlook and secondly on account of the distinctions of caste, language, religious opinions and province. They are not known to act together, and I do not think that the Muslim fear is well grounded.

But taking facts as they are, it is desirable to see if any political remedies can be devised so that the two communities can learn to work with one another. The Muslims feel that in the eight provinces their true representatives are not in the cabinets and that the admission of one or two Muslims who do not belong to the Muslim League is not only no answer to their complaint but is an added grievance, in that it is an obvious attempt to divide the Muslims by offers of place and position to non-representative Muslims. On the other hand they contend that in the provinces in which the Muslims are in a majority the Hindu members of the cabinets are not men of straw but are people of weight in their community. I am inclined to think that there is a basis of truth in the Muslim complaint. The Muslim members of cabinets must be generally acceptable to their own community in the same way as the Hindu members to theirs. The Congress majority rely upon the principle of joint responsibility and are keen on preserving strict party discipline. It, therefore, will not admit any Muslim member into its cabinet unless he is prepared to sign the Congress pledge, put on the Congress uniform, and accept, at least in name, all Congress principles and practices all of which are not political in character. It seems to me that the first step to ease the injured *amour propre* of the Muslims is to give up the insistence on the Congress pledge and other non-essential elements of the Congress creed and practices. The majority should enunciate a definite programme of political and economic measures which it desires to carry out within the term of the legislature. If the Muslim League or any of its members is prepared generally to accept this programme, place should be found for such in the cabinet. It may happen that on one or two points there may be a difference of view, but on such questions free vote should be allowed and the decision should be left to the unrestricted judgment of the Assembly without the use of the party whips. Such a freedom of voting is not unknown even in British cabinets, and I know of at least one instance where even in the Morley-Minto Councils a member of the Executive Council was, for conscientious reasons, allowed to abstain from voting on the Government side, and it may be mentioned in passing that this abstention led to the defeat of Government by one vote. It may be generally expected that when a body of intelligent men, drawn together by a general consensus of views, work daily together in intimate association, such cases will not be frequent and there will be a good deal of give-and-take between them. It will be generally agreed that the Congress majority is inclined to treat all opposition with scant courtesy, to make every vote a party one, thus making its members mere automata, and to carry out the behests of the High Command with a high hand. For the satisfactory working of democratic institutions there must be a desire to treat every opposition with respect and to yield on points on which the opposite party makes out a good case in debate, even though it is against the previous decision of the party in power. The large majorities which the Congress party has in seven provinces appear to have turned its head, and its want of consideration to its opponents had made all minorities feel disgruntled and sullen. If no victory in constitutional argument can avail, people's minds naturally turn to extra-constitutional ways of action. The Congress party in the legislatures should learn the lesson of the saying, 'It is good to have a giant's strength, but it is cruel to use it like a giant.'

Some modification of the rigorous party discipline seems to be called for if the injured feelings of Muslims and other minorities are to be allayed. It is not a great deviation even from the strict democratic practice of England, where in times of great stress all parties combine to form national Governments without giving up their own fundamental principles. Cannot India try various new methods and work out a system which will best suit its own peculiar conditions? The one most important point is to bring various communities together on purely political and economic platforms and to do away with communal parties altogether. This can be done by winning each other's confidence. Riding the high horse on the strength of huge majorities is not the best way of attaining the object. It may be worth while studying the constitution of a country like Switzerland where three

clearly marked linguistic divisions of the country have long learnt to work in harmony for the good of the Motherland. There the German, the French or the Italian speaking constituents of the population do not cherish any extra-territorial loyalty to Germany, France or Italy, as they all feel that they can fulfil their destinies in their own land. There all the three languages are treated alike by the state, nor is there any distinction between the Roman Catholic or Protestant populations so far as their country is concerned,

#### THE DEFENCE PROBLEM

I earnestly trust that the leaders of the Congress, the Muslim League and other parties and sections in the country will come together and in a conciliatory spirit work out the country's programme for the future. Recrimination must be avoided and a determined effort must be made to reach a settlement. There may be some difficulties from the British Government, but in the present state they will surely not be insuperable. Britain has learned that a strong and contented India, an India which as an equal partner in the British commonwealth of nations, is a great asset to the whole structure.

In the long range programme to be carried out the defence problem must naturally loom the largest. The army should have to be completely Indianized, its standing strength probably increased and its trained reserves multiplied manifold. In a world full of nations armed to the teeth and regardless of any sanctions except those of force, India cannot continue to be weak and defenceless. Its vast population must be made military-minded, its young educated men should be trained in the arts of modern warfare and should have all opportunities for a military career.

The distinction between enlisted and non-enlisted classes or between military and non-military castes should be at once abolished. During the great war young men from the office desk who had no idea of military duties became efficient officers, soldiers, sailors or pilots after a short training. Why cannot the same be possible in India? In this connection I would once again urge the necessity of making a modicum of military training compulsory for all university students. [ And it is interesting to observe that on the motion of a distinguished Liberal, Dr. G. S. Mahajani, principal of the Fergusson College, Poona, the Bombay Legislative Council passed a resolution this year accepting this, and I understand that it was forwarded with a favourable recommendation by the Congress Government to the Government of India. I hope early action will be taken in this matter. ] If they are required to do this, there will be less opposition to extend military training to other classes. I do not propose universal compulsion at this stage but I earnestly plead for a wider dissemination of military ideas and discipline among the mass of the people. Such measures will be useful not only from the military ideas and discipline among the mass of the people. Such measures will be useful not only from the military point of view, but they will increase the economic and moral efficiency of the people of the country.

The Air arm is now perhaps the most vital element of national defence, and India is most backward in this respect. A large increase in the Indian Air Force is immediately called for, and, as a background for this, civil aviation must be more widely encouraged. Indians can make good pilots, engineers and technicians, but Government must be made to take all measures to use this ability which is lying unused. An air force will in all probability not be so costly as a large navy for which for many years we shall have to depend upon Britain in the main. At the same time the rudimentary organisation called the Indian navy of present must be a good deal expanded, and Indians should be taken in largest number for all ranks, and it should be completely Indianised at no distant date, though for the moment we shall want the help of capable officers of the British navy with its long glorious traditions to train our own officers and men. I realise that all these developments will cost far more than at present; but I am convinced that when Indians feel that they are the necessary steps to the attainment of their full political stature, there will be little serious objection to them on their part. Let India be convinced, that there is a genuine, earnest and well-planned programme and there will be a readiness to bear any sacrifice.

#### INDUSTRIAL PLANNING

Defence, however, requires not only men in the fighting services but complete industrial organisation to provide munitions and other material. For this purpose industrial planning is as necessary as the training of personnel. I am very glad to

see that the Congress executive has appointed a national planning committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and I hope it will lay down a comprehensive programme and that provincial and central Governments will carry it out vigorously. If the Pandit can do this work satisfactorily, he will be doing far more for the country than any amount of polemical recrimination. In this connection I must also urge the encouragement of Indian shipping in all ways, and cordially support the proposal to restrict coastal shipping to Indian concerns as is done by many other countries. Just as wide-spread civil aviation is a necessary background to an efficient air force, an extensive merchant marine is essential to a national navy. On several points we are likely to come into conflict with vested foreign interests, but if all Indian parties continue to make a united demand for such national reorganisation as well as for political advance it cannot be long withstood.

#### FEDERATION

It is not my desire to speak at any great length on purely political reforms. Full Dominion Status is what we all aim at, and every political measure must be a step in the direction of its attainment. In its broad outlines the India Dominion that we envisage must be federal in structure with the subordinate administrations having clearly marked functions. I am in favour of a strong Central Government, for there is but too great a fissiparous tendency in India, and we should be careful to discourage it as far as possible. Indian States will necessarily have to form component parts in such a federation. When we find that the best minds of Europe are groping towards a European Federation, in which the present independent nations will shed some of their existing privileges, as the solution of the present malaise of their continent, we should beware of preparing trouble for ourselves in future by entrenching the component units of an Indian federation too firmly in their particularist privileges. One of the great drawbacks of the new Government of India Act is that it shows too great a tenderness for the rights of the components of the Federation, and the Indian States in particular are to make hardly any sacrifices for the privileges of joining it. They are looking too much to their treaty rights and prerogatives. But modern political thought requires that there must be some easily practicable method of revising treaties that are out of date, and Europe has come to its present deplorable condition because the provisions relating to treaty revision were found impracticable or were not acted upon. The Indian States must realise the changed condition of India and the world. When long standing imperial diadems have toppled down in the dust, and their wearers when not physically liquidated are in exile, Indian rulers should not insist too much on their outworn treaties or depend upon a foreign government for support. They should introduce reforms in their States and bring their people at least up to the political level of their neighbours in British provinces. Some of the far-sighted among them are already taking means to effect this change, but they all should bestir themselves in good time, for the march of events may otherwise be too strong for them. The British Indian provinces also must adjust their provincial ambitions to the supreme need of having a strong centre. In every federation there is generally a well marked demarcation between the central and the provincial sphere, but in any Federation worth the name the interests of the centre must ordinarily prevail ultimately against its subordinate member.

#### NEED OF ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE

The need of the hour is to secure peaceful political evolution in India. It is not to be secured by the delivery of political ultimatums, or by enunciating the minimum demands of any one section, or by too great an insistence on treaties or vested rights, or by any fanciful theories of racial superiority or capacity. If this evolution is brought about in conditions of strife and turmoil, it will leave behind it unseavoury memories which will hamper future progress. The best way is for all parties, the Government, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Sabha, the Scheduled classes, the Liberals and other sections, to come together in a spirit of friendliness and hammer out a solution by compromise.

If all parties understand that too great an insistence on their own claim is likely to harm the whole structure, that a free and honourable association with the British Commonwealth of Nations is to be preferred to a nominally independent existence which is bound to be precarious in the actual state of the world, that religious considerations should be kept out of practical questions of politics and economics, that full liberty of the individual is a goal



worth striving for, and that the *raison d'être* of a state is only to secure this liberty to the individual, it will be possible to reach a peaceful solution of the Indian problem.

In a conference of this kind the Liberals have an essential part to play. There is the only party which is not based on religious affiliations and which believes in constitutional methods and gradual evolution. Still I am sure Indian Liberals will be prepared to co-operate whole-heartedly with any or all sections whatever may be their theoretical differences with them.

They firmly trust that a great future lies before their country and that their country will make its own contribution to the progress of the world. The world is for the moment out of joint. But it is only by a wise application of broad liberal principles that it will once more begin to tread the well-tried path of peaceful civilisation which is the surest condition for securing the happiness and contentment of humanity.

I have confined myself to questions relating to India's constitutional progress as these are at present occupying most attention in the country. I have left myself no time to speak at any length about matters of legislation and administration, both in the Central and Provincial sphere. Not that these matters are less important, for they affect the real happiness of the people and determine the pace of the country's progress. But I spoke about many of them fifteen years ago and do not wish to repeat myself more than I can help. Moreover, in our legislature, they receive detailed consideration, though unfortunately the point of view of the Liberals is often not adequately expressed owing to their absence from the legislatures. Such questions refer to tenancy legislation, to schemes for debt redemption, to industrial disputes, to rural reconstruction, to reorganisation of education of all grades (including the Wardha Scheme), to the introduction of prohibition, to the use of repressive legislation to control movements of individuals and meetings and free expression of opinion by the press, to interference with ordinary processes of law, to the distribution of patronage, to the treatment of the services, to the day-to-day relations between communities, to the uplift of the scheduled classes, to Shia-Sunni disputes, to the advancement and regulation of industries like sugar, textiles, &c., to industrial planning, to road development, to the administration of railways, and to a host of other matters. While on many of these questions the aims of governments are admirable, the way in which they are being carried out leave much to be desired. On all these questions the Liberals have a definite outlook. On the one hand they refuse to remain stagnant and desire to move with the times; on the other they generally eschew shock tactics, high-sounding phrases and method of jobbery, graft and improper patronage. They put every question to the test of general good, dealing tenderly, but not too tenderly, with vested interests, but realising at the same time the need for well-considered changes. They have an intense belief in the liberty of every individual consistently with similar liberty for all, and abhor all totalitarian methods in whatever form they may clothe themselves. The lesson of liberalism as we represent it is therefore essential in the public life of our country, and it is up to us to make our voice heard and felt.

The times require that Liberals should bestir themselves and spread their views among a much wider section of the public than we unfortunately seem to be doing at present. Disappointments and neglect we may have to face; but we should not lose heart. You cannot fool all the people all the time, and I am sure that the innate practical sense of our people will ere long come back to the gospel of rational progress, individual freedom of thought and action and the greatest good of the greatest number. Shall we not put all our energies into this all-important national work?

## Proceedings & Resolutions—28th. & 29th. December 1939

### The Liberal Party's Losses

The following resolution was put from the chair and passed, all standing :—

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India records with sorrow the death of Kumar Rajendra Singh of Lucknow, a former Minister in the U. P. Government, who was a prominent member of the Liberal Party and rendered meritorious services to the country. The Federation offers its deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

(b) The Federation records with sorrow the deaths of Mr. A. V. Patwardhan, a foundation-member of the Servants of India Society, who specially interested himself in the question of Indian states; Sir Hormosji Dinshaw who was a member of the party ever since its foundation and a great philanthropist; Mr. S. S. Persha a member of the Telugu community of Bombay; and Dr. Sir Nuserwanji H. Choksey of Bombay, all of whom were staunch Liberals and rendered valued services to the country. The Federation offers its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

#### International War

*Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh* moved the following resolution :—

The Federation strongly condemns the policy of aggression followed by the totalitarian states against smaller or weaker states and sympathizes with the victims. The Federation considers that Britain and France are fighting Germany in the cause of democracy and freedom and feels that Indian sympathies are on the side of democratic nations and that the whole of India wishes that their efforts will be crowned with success.

The Federation appeals to all Indians to give their support to the cause for which the democracies are fighting.

The Federation is convinced that the larger interests of India are bound up with the defeat of Nazism and the success of the cause of democracy and freedom, but in order to enable India to put forth its wholehearted support the imagination of the people should be captured by change in the attitude of the British Government regarding the future of India.

#### Viceroy's Statement

*Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar* (Bombay) next moved :

The National Liberal Federation of India, having fully considered the statement issued by his Excellency the Viceroy and subsequent official statements, both in England and India, is strongly of opinion that they are quite unsatisfactory inasmuch as they

(a) Do not go beyond the position taken up in 1917 and imply the postponement of the advent of Dominion Status to an indefinite and distant future and do not envisage its achievement within a definite period in the near future;

(b) Leave the centre irresponsible as it is at present;

(c) Give to the minority communities a virtual veto on future constitutional progress;

(d) Make the admission of a large Indian element into the Viceroy's Executive Council conditional on the settlement of the communal problem in the provinces, although this was not a condition precedent to the establishment of Federation under the Government of India Act, 1935;

(e) Ignore the urgent need for the rapid nationalization of the Defence forces in all their branches.

(2) The Consultative Committee as proposed by the Viceroy, the object of which was to win Indian support in the prosecution of war, could be no substitute for responsibility at the centre and therefore failed to appeal to the people.

#### Dominion Status

The next resolution on Dominion Status was moved by *Mr. J. N. Basu* (Calcutta) :—

This Federation strongly urges (1) that the Government of India Act of 1935 should be so amended

(a) As to provide for the establishment of complete responsible government in the provinces and on a federal basis at the Centre so that India may automatically become a Dominion within the meaning of the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and of the Statute of Westminster on the conclusion of the war; and (b) As to secure to the subject of States, the right of election of State representatives.

(2) That in the meanwhile immediate steps should be taken to nationalise the army so as to enable India to shoulder the responsibility of Dominion Status.

#### Framing of Future Constitution for India

The Liberal Federation is strongly of opinion that the future constitution of India should be framed by Indians themselves but considers that the idea of the proposed constituent assembly is impracticable and is likely to retard our progress.

The Federation therefore suggests that a conference be convened in India by his Majesty's Government for framing the constitution and that it should be composed of: (1) The representatives of elected members of Provincial and Central Legislatures in British India elected on the basis of proportional representation. (2) The representatives of elected members of legislatures of Indian States. (3) The rulers of major States or their ministers invited by the Viceroy and the representatives of other Princes elected by the Chamber of Princes. (4) Representatives elected by landholders' associations, associations representing trade and commerce and associations representing agricultural and industrial labour. (5) A certain number of the members of the Conference to be nominated by the Viceroy to represent such interests and views as may otherwise go unrepresented.

#### Separation of Executive and Judiciary

The National Liberal Federation places on record its great disappointment at and protest against the manner in which Provincial Governments including Congress Ministries have failed to carry out separation of the Executive from the Judiciary.

It considers the reform urgently necessary and urges that comprehensive schemes separating the two functions be carried into effect as early as possible.

#### Defence

1. The National Liberal Federation strongly protests against the decision of his Majesty's Government (a) to give an extended meaning to Indian Defence by making India share without her consent in the responsibility of defending Singapore and Egypt although no such responsibility has been laid on the shoulders of any of the Dominions vitally interested in the defence of these places, (b) to treat one-tenth of the army in India virtually as an Imperial Reserve for utilization outside India in defence of British possessions between Egypt and Singapore, and (c) to make India liable for the payment of the maintenance charges of this Reserve even when it is employed in defence of these possessions.

2. In spite of the heavy burden of military expenditure borne by the country since the inception of the British rule, the Government have utterly failed in their duty to equip the country adequately for defensive purposes. The Federation reiterates its demand for (a) the rapid nationalization of the defence forces of India involving the replacement of British troops and the Royal Air Force by Indian Land and Air Forces and the substitution of Indian for European officers in the Army, Navy and Air Forces of the country, (b) the redistribution of the existing defence expenditure so as to provide more money for the rapid development of the Indian Air Force, the organization of defence against air raids which has been rendered essential by the changed international situation, the Federation regretting that no steps have been taken in this direction and that the measures taken to train Indian pilots are extremely inadequate specially as compared with those taken in some of the dominions, (c) the removal of provincial and class restrictions regarding recruitment to the army, (d) a wide expansion, however possible on a compulsory basis, of the University Training Corps and the selection of cadets from the corps for admission to the Indian Military Academy, (e) the introduction of military drill and the establishment of cadet corps in schools in accordance with the recommendations of the Shea Committee, (f) a much wider extension of the Indian territorial force and (g) the taking of all necessary steps to make the people of this country more self-reliant in the matter of defence and to make India self-sufficient so far as possible in regard to the production of war materials.

#### Indians Overseas

*Ceylon.*—1. The National Liberal Federation strongly protests against the Ceylon Government's policy of discrimination against Indians and their decision.

(a) to dismiss and repatriate Indians employed in Government Departments since April 1, 1934,

(b) to retrench Indian employees of more than five but less than ten years of service on a racial basis, if they do not voluntarily retire by the end of 1939.

2. The Federation fully supports the decision of the Government of India to prohibit the emigration of Indian labour to Ceylon and urges it to take necessary measures to secure justice to the Indian community.

*South Africa.*—This Federation expresses its indignation and resentment at the continued ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa and the policy of segregation embodied in the Asiatic Land and Trading Act although there was no proof that Indians were violating any of the existing statutes, or were resorting to illegal

practices and although the Union Government have undertaken under the Cape Town Agreement to treat the Indian community as an integral part of the population of the Union of South Africa and to take steps to raise their position.

*Fiji.*—This Federation draws the attention of the Government of India to the grievances of the Indians of Fiji as stated in the resolution passed at the All-Fiji Indian Conference in November, 1938, and urges it to press his Majesty's Government to agree to the appointment of an Agent to the Government of India in Fiji which, in the opinion of this Federation, is necessary to develop better understanding between the Government of India and the Government of Fiji and to enhance the status of the Indian community. The war should not be allowed to stand in the way of the satisfaction of this demand which ought to have been agreed to, long ago, by his Majesty's Government.

*Malaya.*—The Liberal Federation appreciates the action taken by the Government of India in stopping assisted emigration to Malaya as a protest against the reduction of the wages of Indian labourers employed on plantations by the planters and urges it to prohibit all emigration of labour, whether assisted or unassisted, as has been done in the case of Ceylon, in order to protect the rights of Indian labour.

The Federation further impresses on the Government of India the need for taking steps to secure the rights of the Indian community in Malaya both in order to vindicate Indian self-respect and to raise the status of India.

#### Indian Consular Service

(a) In the interests of safeguarding the rights of Indians living in other parts of the British Empire as well as in foreign countries, the National Liberal Federation of India is of opinion that an Indian Consular Service should be developed on the lines adopted by the Dominions.

(b) Pending the development of such a Consular Service, the Federation urges the admission of Indians into the British Diplomatic and Consular Corps from which Indians have been so far scrupulously excluded.

#### Reform in the Indian States

(a) The National Liberal Federation of India welcomes the steps taken by some Indian Princes to associate their subjects with the administration of their states.

(b) The Federation reaffirms its complete sympathy with the natural and legitimate aspirations of the people of Indian states for civil and political liberties.

(c) The Federation trusts that the rulers of states will realize in their own interest that, with the working of responsible government in the provinces, it is no longer possible for them to continue to administer their states on the existing lines. The Federation, therefore, urges the rulers to concede to their subjects without any further delay the right of security of person and property, liberty of speech and of the press, freedom of association, an independent judiciary, and to initiate adequate measures for the establishment of responsible government.

#### War and Industrial Development

The National Liberal Federation urges the Government of India to take steps to encourage and develop all such industries as can be expanded or established on a sound basis during the war or are necessary in the larger interests of the country.

#### Rural Economic Development

The National Liberal Federation advocates measures to secure

(a) the relief of agricultural indebtedness and the adoption of measures to check further fragmentation and facilitate the consolidation of agricultural holdings,

(b) the embodiment in legislative enactments of the main principles of land revenue assessment in provinces where this has not been done,

(c) substantial aid in the development of industries, big and small alike,

(d) a fiscal and monetary policy wholly in the interests of the country,

(e) legislation for the more adequate protection of the labouring classes both in urban and rural areas,

(f) the early introduction of free and compulsory elementary education for both boys and girls,

(g) adequate provision for medical relief and the promotion of public health, particularly in rural areas.

# The All India Christian Conference

Annual Session—Nagpur—27th. December 1939

## The Presidential Address

The annual session of the Council of the All India Christian Conference was held at Nagpur on the 27th. December 1939 and continued for the next two days under the presidency of Prof. *Harendra Chandra Mukherjee*, who in the course of his address said :—

Before the present war, British subjects of the Dominions were permitted to enlist in the defence services and granted commissions, while Indian subjects of His Majesty were debarred from enjoying this privilege. Recently this injustice has been removed so far as Indians now resident in England are concerned which, naturally, is welcome to us. The policy needs to be carried to its logical conclusion. The time has come when the disabilities as regards recruitment to the defence service under which Indians labour in their own motherland have to be removed. The British administration does not seem to have realised how much India resents the existing policy excluding Indians from positions of responsibility in our own army. It has disappointed us that whenever we have asked that the officer ranks should be Indianised, we have been told that India cannot provide a sufficiently large number of educated young men with military traditions and public school experience behind them. I have very carefully gone through the speeches made in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords by the British Cabinet and members of all the parties have noted the absence of any reference whatsoever to these two aspects of the defence problem, viz., the throwing open of recruitment to members of every province so long as they can satisfy the army tests and the Indianisations of the officer ranks.

Indians have always been of opinion that the best proof that Britain can give of the genuineness of her desire to make India a partner in the Commonwealth is a radical change in her present defence policy. We feel that the British administration which has yet been unable to trust us fully will have only itself to blame if India, at any time, has to engage in a large scale war with some aggressive nation inside her own frontiers and if the supply of soldiers coming from the so-called martial races fails.

It is said that the present war is being waged for the purpose of creating a new world order and establishing the reign of peace and justice. That India is really desirous of abolishing for good the use of force as a means of settling international differences is evident from the unanimous support accorded to the British Government at the present juncture. At the same time, it is but natural for India to enquire whether she, in her turn, will be permitted the enjoyment of that freedom for ensuring which men and money are being poured out of her borders lavishly. In this matter also, there is unanimity for our All-India organisations such as the Indian National Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the National Liberal Federation and similar other political and semi-political bodies have declared in no uncertain terms their demand for independence or its substance.

Political India has always maintained that the history of the communal award amply bears out the view that the policy followed by the British Government is perhaps more responsible than any other single factor for the accentuation of the communal problem in its political aspect. From 1906 onwards, if not from a still earlier time, the British administration has sought to utilise the Muslim minority community as a counterpoise against the majority Hindu community which growing too nationalistic in its outlook and too insistent in the demands for political reforms has nearly always proved a thorn in its side. The private correspondence of Lytton, Curzon, Minto, Morley proves this beyond any doubt. Montague and Macdonald may be said to have only extended the application of an already accepted principle. Its culmination is found in the anti-national and utterly one-sided Communal Award of 1932.

While no fair-minded Indian will ignore the existence of the communal problem or minimise its importance, we feel that the insistence on the communal difficulty as the slowest of political development is not the right attitude in the

matter. I shall go further and say that I have often felt that the improper and unreasonable stand often taken by some of our Mussalman brethren and by the Muslim League is more due to the encouragement received systematically from the British administration than from any other circumstance. I believe that our Mussalman brethren far from labouring under any special disabilities on account of their being a minority community have been favoured almost everywhere and that, at the expense of the majority Hindu community, with the result that to-day many, but not the more reasonable, patriotic and farsighted among them, are behaving like the spoilt children of the British administration, of Hindu weakness in yielding too easily its legitimate rights and recently of Congress precipitancy to placate them.

I am constrained to add that the unusual consideration shown by the Congress Ministries has not had the effect anticipated, namely, of propitiating our Mussalman brethren and of removing their distrust. On the other hand, they have displayed what I am regretfully compelled to call an increasing truculence and every demand that has been made have seemed to whet their appetite for more.

I most willingly admit that my observations do not apply to every Muslim organisation; for in spite of the claims put forward by the Muslim League to be the sole representative of our Mussalman brethren, there are other large, important and influential organisations which do not admit this to be the fact. It seems to me that any arrangement or compromise into which the Muslim League may enter cannot be binding upon the whole Mussalman community. The importance it has come to acquire in the eyes of the British Government is at least to a certain extent unwarranted by facts. But none the less neither the Muslim League nor its leaders seem to suffer from any lack of self-confidence for they have gone on making demand after demand without any one pointing out to them how hollow their claims to be the spokesman of the Mussalman are. No one who has time to study the communal problem and to establish contact with both Hindus and Muslims can deny that the expectation of anything like an immediate and effective reconciliation between them is an impossibility. If further political progress is to depend on arriving at such an understanding, we may take it for granted that, for some time to come, we shall have to stop where we are at present.

I contend that the difficulties due to the communal situation have been exaggerated. Nor can they be removed so long as both the Indian National Congress and the British administration approach the Muslim League and beg and beseech its co-operation. In my view, the solution will come only when the majority community and the British Government and other groups which hold similar or identical views regarding the desirability of having a federated India come together and proceed with the task of hammering out a constitution which will not deny their legitimate rights to any social and religious group including our Mussalman brethren. If Dominion Status is to be conferred on us only when there is absolute unity, then indeed there is no chance of our ever getting it. It has also been pointed out from more than one quarter that the history of the world has proved that the kind of unity demanded from India has succeeded and not preceded the enjoyment of the fullest measure of independence.

One might well point out that it was in the middle of the last war that the pledge of ultimate Self-Government was given to India in the House of Commons in August, 1917, that the Montague-Chelmsford reforms were framed and published while fighting was still going on and that a beginning to implement them was made during the same period. India would like to know what are the circumstances which are preventing the adoption of a similar policy if Britain is really desirous of meeting India's wishes. At the worst, is it impossible for Britain to guarantee Dominion Status to India immediately after the war and, as a proof of her good intentions, to import a popular element into the General Government by including in it a few representative leaders?

The fact that India has been drawn into the conflict without any effort being made to ascertain her wishes has antagonised Indian feelings, India's inferior constitutional status in the British Empire has hurt her sense of self-respect. She realises that it is her duty to do whatever lies in her power to destroy the reign of brute force. At the same time, she wishes to learn whether, as one of the results of the war now being waged into which she has been drawn, she is likely to enjoy here and now, the same blessings which she expected to come as the result of the joint efforts of all peace-loving nations banding herself. And it is over this question that the present deadlock has come. The view of our community is that India

should give whatever help she can during the present struggle but that she ought to make it absolutely clear that as soon as it has been fought to a finish and power politics abolished, there should be immediate realisation of these her legitimate desires.

Following the lead of our older race of leaders, the All-India Conference has condemned the Communal Award and has offered to either give it up or to have it modified under certain conditions. As a result of the visits paid by me to the different provinces of India, I found that our community has elected its representatives to the provincial legislatures on a communal basis only where there are predominantly large Indian Christian population. Elsewhere, Indian Christians have voted in what are called "general" constituencies and have helped to send non-Christians to the legislatures as their representatives.

I have not, up to the present, received any kind of report from any quarter that these non-Christian representatives are sacrificing the interests of their Indian Christian supporters in favour of their numerically stronger non-Christian supporters. The absence of such reports has been a source of very great gratification to me for it has proved beyond the slight shadow of doubt that at least we, as a community, have developed the capacity to trust our brothers in blood from whom we differ only in the matter of professing and practising a different faith and that our attitude has been more than justified by actual experience. Granting for the sake of argument, that, here and there, Indian Christians are being treated badly on account of their numerical weakness which makes oppression easy, I would still exhort my co-religionists not to pin their faith for safeguarding their interests on communal representation but on the goodwill of their more powerful brothers in blood.

I maintain that in our unfortunate motherland, torn asunder by party faction and communal distrust, a distinctly valuable contribution is being made by our small and apparently insignificant community and that if we only have sufficient wisdom to go a step further and to arrive at the unanimous decision to give up separate electorates, those who come after us will have to recognise the worth of our services to the motherland in assisting to weld together all her children into one nation.

As the result of the very numerous contacts I was able to establish with non-Christian leaders holding widely different political views, I realised for the first time what a unique position our community has succeeded in securing for itself in the eyes of the more discerning sections of political India. To-day the Indian Christians have found his place in the political picture. Our elected representatives in the different provincial legislatures are playing, and have played, their part with credit in the public life of the country and their support has been sought by all political parties, progressive and reactionary.

But there is a striking way in which we can serve India. We must first of all endeavour to compose differences, if any, which exist among ourselves and then, as a community, act in such a way as to establish peace and goodwill among the divergent interests and contending parties whose constant bickerings are embittering the public life of our motherland. The Indian Christian community will fulfil a glorious mission enjoying as it does the goodwill and confidence of the two major communities, if it can bridge the gap at present separating them.

We have our rights and our privileges as a minority community and these are guaranteed to us by legislation, but let me warn all that if we lay emphasis on these only, we shall forfeit that respect which has been worn for us by the unselfish and devoted spirit of our old leaders. The only way open to a minority community to undertake and discharge the duty of assisting in the establishment of peace and harmony in our motherland is to give up all claims to preferential treatment and thus to shame the more grasping and selfish sections of the Indian population into a deeper and more effective sense of their public duty. This has been done by our predecessors and it will have to be done again. Such a course is bound to entail sufferings and, as such, may be difficult for others but, most certainly not for those who profess to be loyal followers of the "Prince of Peace" and the "Man of Sorrows."

Resolutions—Sd. Day—Nagpur—26th. December 1939

#### RESOLUTION ON WAR

A resolution calling upon the British Government "to declare in unequivocal terms that freedom, justice and equality are the aims of the present war and that

the aim of self-government applies to India, which should be declared to possess full Dominion Status immediately after the war ended" was adopted at the Conference on the next day.

The declarations so far made by various statesmen, the resolution added, were not satisfactory and fell far below the requirements. The Conference appealed to the Viceroy and through him to statesmen in Britain not to let this opportunity slip for establishing the future relationship of the two countries on a basis of friendship and honourable equality and mutual assistance and co-operation.

A resolution offering full and unconditional assistance to the British Government in the prosecution of the present war was also adopted by the conference.

The resolution, which was moved by Mr. B. L. Ralia Ram, General Secretary of the Conference, stated, "India should offer full and unconditional assistance to the Government for the prosecution of this war, since India stands for principles of freedom, self-determination and a truly democratic form of Government. For this reason, it calls upon Indian Christians to render every possible help to the Government."

#### Resolutions—3rd. Day—Nagpur—29th. December 1939

##### NATIONALISTIC CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The following resolutions was passed by conference on the third day :—

"As far as our community is concerned it shall be satisfied if the Constitution of India is based on a purely nationalistic ideal." The resolution added : "This Conference believes that a self-governing India cannot attain her full nationhood until every citizen is prepared to give full allegiance and loyalty to the nation, irrespective of religious affiliation."

The Conference deplored that negotiations among the accredited leaders had hitherto not created an atmosphere favourable to give effect to the nationalistic ideal and urged that they should lose no time in arriving at an amicable settlement.

The Conference further recommended that (a) statutory constitutional and legal guarantee be provided for the right of free choice of religion and the protection of religious rights of all Indian people individually and corporately, including specific provision for the right of practice of worship ; and the propagation of religion without let or hindrance ; (b) an effective machinery be provided to ensure unmolested observance of religious life ; (c) statutory social and intellectual freedom for the individual and groups ; (d) statutory constitutional legal provision be made for freedom of speech and discussion ; (e) all citizens must be deemed equal before the law irrespective of caste or sex ; and (f) all citizens must have equal rights and obligations in regard to places of public resort maintained by the state or by public funds or dedicated by private persons for the public use.

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# The All India Hindu Mahasabha

Twenty-first session—Calcutta—28th. to 30th. December 1939

## The Welcome Address

The twenty-first session of the All India Hindu Mahasabha commenced at the Deshbandhupark, Calcutta on the 28th. December 1939 under the presidency of *Sri Venayak Damodar Savarkar*. *Sir Manmatha Nath Mookerjee*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates said :—

As Chairman of the Reception Committee I accord you a most hearty welcome to this Conference of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha. In doing so, the words of welcome that I utter are not mere words of convention, but words which proceed from the inmost depths of my heart and genuinely represent the feelings of all who have for a good long time past been eagerly longing for the moment when this Conference would meet. That moment has now arrived. Our feelings on the occasion are a mixture of pride, joy, encouragement and gratitude,—in finding that in our unhappiness we have your sincere sympathy, that we are not so helpless as we at times feel and that many of you have ignored inconveniences and hardships of no mean order to come and stand by our side at this our hour of need. Hindu India at the present moment is faced with problems of immense importance and magnitude: but apart from problems of All-India nature, which must engage the attention of us all, the Province of Bengal, in particular, has problems of her own which demand your immediate and most serious deliberations. And it is fortunate, therefore, that the Conference should be meeting here this year. Let me assure you that you are not holding this Conference a moment too soon, for things are daily drifting from bad to worse, and if indeed, there is any means of saving us, that means should be resorted to here and now. In the course of our deliberations you will have a clear idea as to how we stand and you will, no doubt, try to arrive at a solution. In the meantime, once again I extend to you a most cordial and sincere welcome.

Here, in this assembly, I find some of my most esteemed personal friends hailing from parts of the country far and near,—stalwart champions of the cause of Hindu India—in whose counsel and guidance I have very great faith. I shall not, for obvious reasons, call up their blushes by naming them individually. Needless to say that their presence is peculiarly gratifying to me and I am personally grateful to them for giving me the pleasure of meeting them on this occasion.

But to you, Sir, I cannot afford to omit to address a few words. Two years and seven months ago, when you found yourself free to engage in the service of your country, your countrymen remained for a time in breathless suspense, not being in a position to anticipate what course you would adopt. You soon dispelled the unfounded apprehensions, which some of them may have felt. True to the blood that flows in your veins you declined to throw yourself into the different political currents, which purported to run their wonted course, and, ignoring tempting offers of positions and power, overcame all attractions and grasped the cause that was your own—the cause of Hindu India. With that love for freedom of thought and action which is a part of your nature, with that singular courage of conviction which has characterized your life from your boyhood and with an unflinching faith in your own principles as regards the salvation of the country in all its aspects, you refused to be caught in the flowing tides and took up the fight for our national uplift on lines that seemed to you right and proper. Your clarion call, let me assure you if you need any assurance at all, has awakened Hindu India from the deep stupor she was in. Hindu India has now risen for action, and we have no doubt, judging from the response she has given, that she will again rise to that glorious height which she once attained. Your presence in our midst Sir, has evoked an enthusiasm even in our rank and file, which, it is no language of hyperbole to say, is unique and unprecedented.

I have said, Hindu India will rise 'again'. I have used the word 'again' not without due deliberation. For, speaking for myself, I say without reserve that if once more something approaching that position is attained, I shall be

perfectly content. To me it is plain that a nation, that can rise to that height, passes beyond the reach or range of foreign domination and becomes a covetable partner of other nations of the world. Not even in my wildest dreams have I ever dreamt a vision of our glory, which can make me feel as proud as I am when I review our own glorious past. I know this utterance of mine will evoke a derisive smile on the lips of many, and I am familiar with that trite saying, that is often levelled against us from more quarters than one, that a great nation, which has no present to speak of, must fall back upon its glory in the past. The charge amuses me for I am one of those who firmly believe that it is because we do not sufficiently care to know or think of our past that we are in this sad plight to-day.

#### INDIA'S GLORIOUS PAST

It will not be disputed that in mental, moral and spiritual sciences and in all matters connected with the inner life of man, the Hindus had attained perfection, and at a time when the rest of the world was enveloped in darkness. But turning to the material side of our existence, which is perhaps more pertinent to the occasion, let me tell you that there is hardly any item on which our ancestors did not excel and compare favourably with, if not actually surpass, the peoples of other countries of the world.

Whether in literature, mathematics, astronomy or in the physical sciences, pure and applied, the achievements of the Hindus, centuries ago, laid the foundation of all the present-day progress and marvels that we boast of.

In Grammar, Linguistics, the Fine Arts (dancing, music, dramatic arts, etc.), Architecture, Painting, even Medicine and Surgery, in all these fields the perfection attained by the ancient Hindus remains unsurpassed to-day and there is hardly anything in the modern world which approaches the eminence which they attained.

The wide circulation, throughout the world, of Indian tales and stories (e. g., the Panchatantra, about which it has been said that next to the Bible it has been translated into the most of the languages of the world) inspired whole nations, and to them Kings and Princes paid attention and honour. Their researches in Chemistry, Ballistics, and Metallurgy were unrivalled. And even the building and wielding of air-ships was not unknown. Their attainments in weaving, spinning and dyeing have not been equalled by anything in modern days.

For about 3000 years India played her part as one of the foremost maritime countries. She had colonies in Pegu, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and other countries. She had trading settlements in Southern China, in the Malayan Peninsula, in Persia, Arabia and even in Egypt. Arts, such as that of ship-building, were dealt with in treatises which themselves formed a huge mass of literature. Intercourse with foreign countries by way of the sea are referred to and narrated in many of the books. When the Romans conquered Egypt they encouraged direct sea-trade with India and broke down the restrictions of trade which had been imposed in the Arabian Sea. Macropolo mentions Indian iron as being sold in the markets of Kerman, from which they were taken by Persian merchants to Venice. Adrial says that the Hindus excelled in the manufacture of iron and steel and had workshops wherein they forged the most famous sabres of the world. Prof. Bayce says that cotton, thread and cloth were exported by the sea to the head of the Persian Gulf from India in 4000 B. C. and they found their way very early to Egypt. Herodotus describes a wool better than that of the sheep. Fine Indian muslins were in great demand and commanded fancy prices in the Roman Empire and in Mediaeval Europe. Other industries and commerce,—in lac, wheat, rice, cinnamon, gum, coal, sugar, oils, clarified butter, silk, precious stones and the like,—flourished remarkably. Our ancient literature affords abundant evidence of the fact that Indian colonies were established far and wide and even in the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, in which Indian culture and civilization were transplanted bodily and on a most excellent footing. Trade-routes were discovered with admirable ingenuity and utilised with remarkable success.

Time will not permit me to go into details. But I may say with confidence that it was not merely the richness of her natural resources that made India the world's mart. Her success was in a far greater measure due to the skill and inventive genius of her artisans, the enterprise and ingenuity of her ship-wrights, the perfection attained by her in theoretical as well as practical sciences, the excellence of her knowledge in the techniques of arts and crafts, and her great power of organisation. This position she attained and continued to retain for a number of centuries.

## DOWNFALL OF HINDUS

How India came to lose that position, I do not know; for history is silent on the point and researches have produced no clear or connected account. In any case, it is no use crying over spilt milk. Suffice it to say that internal dissensions, internecine strifes, onslaughts from outside, foreign domination and repression weakened and enervated Hindu India, which once occupied the highest pinnacle of glory and brought about her ruin,—an annihilation, complete and perfect from all conceivable points of view.

To add to the causes which have been enumerated above, there came into being two more, connected with each other, the combined effect of which has been to produce a gradual but steady diminution in the man-power of the Hindu nation. With the advent of the Moslems and later on of the Christians, India came to have three main religious communities. The Moslems and the Christians are communities the very essence of whose religion is proselytism while the Hindus are not a proselytising community. This proselytisation found a ready field by reason of the rigid rules of caste which either purported to keep sections of the Hindu community out of the recognized Hindu fold or, what is more, as happened in some parts of the country, meted out to certain sections of the Hindu community treatment which often amounted to insult and humiliation, such as is not possible for human being to brook. Readily, therefore, would people, subjected to such indignities, revolt and break away and go over to one or other of the two faiths, which would receive them with open arms. The process has been slow and gradual, but at the same time steady. The loss which Hindu community thus suffered from Moslem and Christian proselytisation has been a loss of considerable magnitude.

More than a quarter of a century ago the effect was detected and a serious note of warning was sounded, notably by Col. U. N. Mukherjee in Bengal and Lala Lal Chand in the Punjab, that the Hindu 'had become a dying race'. This warning was ignored, or, at any rate, no serious notice was taken of it. To all it must have appeared that the position was true in point of fact; and if the position was true in fact it must have been also obvious to all that the only remedy lay in trying to check the decay and recoup the loss. But on the question as to whether that remedy was to be applied, there has always been a sharp difference of opinion. The Buddhist and Sangathan movement has been doing a good deal of work, no doubt; but on the other hand, there is a section of Hindus, by no means negligible, whose religious conviction will not permit them to countenance it. The question is a very delicate one and is, at the same time, equally difficult of solution; while the position, in point of fact, is that during the last 50 years, Hindus in Bengal have dwindled down from 55 per cent to 45 per cent of the total population. Sentiments, which one would like to base on grounds of religion, would know no logic; whereas if the objection has really no religious sanction at its back but is due only to a prohibition imposed for the reason that the practice was considered prejudicial to the best interest of society, as it existed at the time, the objection may perhaps be surmounted. In interpreting prohibitions of this character, one has to bear in mind that even as regards the laws to be found in our Smritis, there is a mixture of morality, religion and law, and that in the interpretation of such laws one has to be careful to see if an inflexible rigidity was actually contemplated. On the other hand, while it may often be necessary to dig up roots and have them re-embedded after making the soil more fertile and to prune or cut away old withered branches so that healthy shoots with a new life may burst forth, yet, at the same time, one has to be cautious to remember that it will not do to destroy roots and branches and all. To bring about a satisfactory reconciliation I can only think of two possible contingencies,—the advent of some law-giver to whom all will bow down their heads or the finding of some agreed basis on which the whole community can proceed. Both these possibilities, however, are too remote to be within the range of probability. And if we wait for either to happen before we think of rallying under one common banner, there will, in all probability, remain nobody to lift the banner itself. Let us, therefore, proceed in the light of our respective convictions, bearing no ill-will towards those who may entertain a contrary view. And let not one section of the community try to force its own views on the other; for, such a course would be productive of a cleavage in our ranks, not less disastrous than the loss that we would be seeking to make up. At the same time, I do not see why one section of the community should ever think of treating another with anything else than on a footing of equality or otherwise than with love, affection and respect.

respect. And notwithstanding the difference of opinion to which I have just referred, I do not see why it should not be possible for us all to regard as Hindu any who "regards this land of Bharat Varsha, from the Indus to the Seas, as his Father-Land as well as his Holy-Land." The difference, to my mind, does not offer any obstacle to our marching forward as a united nation and putting forth a united demand for national emancipation. We stand for equal opportunities for all in public affairs, with special considerations for such brethren of ours as may be in need thereof.

In thinking of the unity of a nation, one cannot ignore that there is a natural barrier between the invader and the invaded, the conqueror and the conquered, the ruler and the ruled. The proposition is too fundamental to require any argument. In view of the role in which the Moslems and then the British came into this country, it is plain to my mind that it is only to the extent that there has been a fusion between either of them and the people of Hindusthan, only to the extent that there has been a merger as it were, that the natural barrier has been removed. The first notable occasion after the British conquest when Hindus and Moslems stood on a common platform was at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny. Speaking on this occasion, Sir Richard Temple, at one time a Provincial satrap, observed,—

"The Brahmins were too numerous in their ranks; they were fanatical and they had the brains to contrive mischief when discontented."

And after referring to some of the causes of the Mutiny, he proceeded to say,—

"This brought about a very unusual combination between Mahomedans and Hindus."

This combination, however, which was characterised as 'very unusual', was by no means a combination arising out of a common feeling of nationalism between Hindus and Moslems. The Indian National Congress started with an ideal of nationalism, which to all intents and purposes, would regard both Hindus and Moslems as children of the soil, and that indeed was a very laudable and correct attitude for the Hindus to take; for Hindus, by religion and culture, are tolerant of the presence in their midst of people of other faiths and would always be prepared to share their lot with those who may have come and made Hindusthan their home. Whatever may have been the reason why this idea of nationalism was tolerated by our rulers—in a letter of Mr. Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress, to Sir Auckland Colvin it was said—

"A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by the British connexion was urgently needed and no more efficacious valve than the Congress could be devised".

We must be grateful to those Indians who conceived the idea. The Hindus joined the organisation in numbers, and some of the better minds amongst the Moslems, equally broad and sympathetic, reciprocated. For a time it seemed that the two sister communities would go hand in hand and try by all legitimate means in their power to have their wrongs righted, their grievances remedied, their political condition ameliorated. But side by side with this movement, another counter-movement grew up, gaining strength from day to day, which kept aloof from the Congress, but with the same objective of achieving the political emancipation of the country which the Congress was striving for. Its creed was not that robust nationalism which would regard Hindus and Moslems as children of the same soil, whose political destinies were to remain linked up together. Its scheme of emancipation was fundamentally based on an ambition, communal in its essence, of securing a domineering position for Islam in the land of the Hindus. It made no secret of its ambition to win from day to day a position for Islam "which may bring her opportunities to fulfil her destiny in this country." Notwithstanding this avowed object and scheme, which in later years could not fail to attract the notice of even a casual observer, the Congress has in recent years failed to face facts, minored matters and lulled itself into an unfounded belief that by acceding to the demands of the Moslems, even to the detriment of Hindu interests, it would be able to placate the Moslems and rouse in Moslem minds the true nationalism that would be for the welfare of the country as a whole. The whole career of the Congress during the last two decades has been marked by a desire to secure this idea of nationalism by giving in from point to point. For instances we need not go too far back. I shall give you two of the more recent instances concerning the Provinces in which you now are: the amputation of the 'Bande Mataram' which perhaps is the unkindest cut that one can think of; and the ascent to the 60 per. cent in the services ratio. One other instance I may give, but in

fairness to the Congress I must say I cannot lay the blame for that on their shoulder. I refer to it only for the purpose of showing that the Hindus in Bengal have always surrendered to Moslem demands without caring to scrutinize whether they are just or unjust. I refer to the removal of 'Sree and Lotus' from our University crest. The demand was justified on the plea that had there been a 'Lotus' alone or a 'Sree' alone, both of which are found in ancient Moslem inscriptions and writings in Bengal—there would have been no objection, but it was the combination of the two that was regarded as a deliberate insult to the religious sentiments of the Moslems of Bengal.

#### MOSLEM DIVISION OF INDIA

But what has been the reciprocity on the other side? A Pakistan, presenting a vista of common brother-hood of Islamic nations from Turkey in the West to East Bengal in the East, including in it the Moslemised portions of India on its North-Western Frontier, such as Sind, Baluchistan, N.-W. Frontier Province and the Punjab, under the supremacy or leadership of any one of the independent Islamic Nations of the West. A revised scheme by which "the Moslems of India call upon the British Parliament to replace the Government of India Act of 1935 by another which should lead the country to resolve itself into an independent confederacy of culturally homogeneous free States." In the preamble to this scheme it is said—

"Whereas the Constitution provided in the Government of India Act of 1935 is not acceptable to the Moslems of India, because

(a) it is framed on the assumption that India is a composite nation which it is not and does not promise to be, so long as the Hindus and Moslems, the two leading or major nationalities of India, continue to remain divided into two different social orders drawing direct inspiration in every detail of life from two fundamentally different religions or cultures,

(b) the democratic majority Government, which it has established in most provincial units and aims to establish at the centre, will in reality be a Government of a single majority nationality viz., the Hindus, on whose sufferance the other nationalities will have to live,

(c) it will reduce the Moslems perpetually to the position of a helpless minority at the centre and in most of the British provinces, as well as in all but a few of the several hundreds of Indian States,

(d) it will deny to them opportunity of economic regeneration and of free and independent cultural development on Islamic lines,

(e) it neutralizes their historic importance in the country and eliminates for ever prospect of their acquiring a status whereby they may exercise a steady influence on the administration of the country and

(f) it helps to intensify and perpetuate the prevailing cultural clashes between the Hindus and the Moslems, religious, social, economic, educational and political—all operating to put off indefinitely India's attainment of independence."

Referring to the division of India into zones, the scheme suggests that the following should constitute the four Moslem zones: The north-west and the north-east blocks, the Delhi-Lucknow block and the Deccan block. The rest of dismembered India would resolve itself into cultural zones for Hindus.

A more recent edition of the scheme to which my attention was drawn the other day, and which, if any thing, seemed still more perfect.

What remains then of the dream of "a common fatherland", of "children of a common soil", of "All-India nationalism."

The most efficient of the factors that go to constitute peoples into a nation is their will to be one homogeneous unit, and even though two communities may be distinct from the point of view of language, culture or religion or even from the point of view of all these elements together, if they have a common homeland and a genuine desire to unite together in one common political and economic interest and there is no desire in one to benefit at the cost of another, one common nationhood is possible. But national unity is impossible where one community is anxious to further its own religious, political or economic aims regardless of what may happen to another.

It seems clear from the ideas which the schemes aforesaid represent that it is the perpetuation of the differences, or rather the broadening, more and more, of the gulf that so unfortunately exists between the two communities which is intended; while there can be no two views possible that if both are to be

together in peace and amity the differences that exist must be made up as quickly as possible. It has come as a painful surprise that even the idea of a Constituent Assembly to compose the differences, which appears to me to be the only real solution of the question, has been turned down by some of the Moslem leaders on the ground that "India is not fit for democracy."

I am firmly of the view that what has happened now should have been foreseen, if only a little fore-thought was bestowed at the time when the Government of India Act of 1919 and the Reforms which it brought in its train were introduced. The relegation of Hindus to the appellation of "Non-Muhammadan" or "General", in my humble opinion, sounded the death-knell of Indian nationalism. How a community, possessing any degree of self-respect, could assent to the obliteration of their very name from the Constitution is a thing which passes my comprehension. Those who were the guardians of our rights at the time raised no protest and to-day the position is that the Hindu in some parts of his own Hindusthan compares himself with the Jew in Hitler's Germany. For this our thanks are due to ourselves, for we would not dare to speak out lest we be suspected as communal and we were prepared, when necessity arose, to let down the whole of Hindu India for the sake of a few Moslem supporters. It is time now that our eyes should open and we should be alive to the realities of the situation.

A great mistake, if mistake be the word that should be used in respect of it, was the attitude that our friends of the Congress took up in connection with the Simon Commission. I may be permitted to quote what our veteran leader Bhai Parmananda has said in this connection. He has summed up the position in these words :—

"The report of the Simon Commission contained proposals much more suitable for the Government of this country than the present Act is. The Simon Report condemned Moslem Communalism and paid little heed to the clamour of the Moslems for what they called 'rights' at the expense of other communities. Besides, there is no indication of a Communal Award in that report. The Provincial Autonomy which formed part of the Simon Commission's report is more in accordance with the professed ideals of the Congress and of nationalism than the Provincial Autonomy under the present Act which the Congress has accepted. If the Congress had possessed statesmanship and foresight it would have accepted the Simon Commission scheme.

Having started the movement of boycott of the Simon Commission, Congress leaders declared that they were not even prepared to read the report of the Simon Commission. The Moslems were naturally not very pleased with it, nevertheless they would have accepted it. The British Government, however, thought that if they could formulate a scheme which would meet with the whole-hearted approval of the Moslems, they would make permanent allies of them".

At the three Round Table Conferences, held in London in the years 1931 to 1933, as the result of which the present Constitution emerged, it is well known that the Hindu cause was not actively represented; it rather went by default. In this connection it is worthwhile to refer to a letter which a member of the Joint Select Committee, who supported the cause of Hindus because he believed it to be just, wrote to Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, in which he said,

"Is it not useless to try to help your countrymen when they are determined not to help themselves."

I have heard it said often and often that the Congress is the only well organised political party in this country, that it has all along fought for the cause of India's freedom and that what little of self-government we have received to-day has been the result of its single-handed efforts and sacrifices. I speak in no carping spirit and should be sorry to be understood as making any disparaging remarks against a body which has borne its fair share in the struggles of the past. But I may be permitted to say with respect that the achievements, such as they were, were the achievements of individuals and the credit for what may have been achieved can in no event go to the 'policy' which the Congress has pursued, for the last twenty years or more. And, when the history of India's constitutional progress comes to be written, there is a risk of its being said that what measure of self-government we have to-day was not obtained by the present-day Congress but rather in spite of it. Indeed, much of the defects and drawbacks that we Hindus feel as being vices in the Constitution are entirely due to this policy.

One example is sufficient,—the notorious Communal Decision, with regard to

which the policy even to-day, notwithstanding stray declarations made here and there by individuals, is the policy of "neither accept, nor reject". Why this indifference? Why this indecision? Or, is it that you are afraid of giving out your mind? Whose interest are you serving by this singularly curious attitude? I am nervous of treading on grounds with which I am not well-acquainted. But I may be permitted to say frankly that I do not understand why, having willingly taken the responsibility of Government, though with the object of wrecking, the Congress Ministry in the several Provinces have resigned at this critical time. In the face of the Declaration of 1919 as regards the policy of His Majesty's Government with reference to India and with full knowledge of the explanations that have been given of that Declaration, can anybody think that there has happened anything fresh, except that the bargaining has failed, which can justify the course that has been adopted. In the negotiations that have been going on, except for the very casual reference to Hindus, here and there, there has been, I feel pained to see, no real recognition of the existence of the Hindus apart from the Congress. The situation has been brought about by the indifference of the Hindus themselves and by tacitly permitting the Congress to play the role of the sole deliverer of goods. Time has come when it must be made clear to everybody and in every quarter that the Hindus are no longer prepared to let this state of things to continue.

I find I am guilty of a digression. I was talking of the fundamental differences that there have been in the conception of nationalism between the two great communities. Efforts to secure a Hindu-Moslem unity, so much to be desired for the mutual benefit of both, have, it must be admitted, so far failed. And I venture to think that so long as these differences in the view points exist, there is no chance of such unity. In the nationalism of Moslems, there is essentially an element of a desire for supremacy,—often expressed in the form that the British took India from the Moslems and, having held India in trust for so many years, are now bound to give her back to the Moslems, if to anybody at all. I am not indulging in imagination. Such a thing was openly said in the Bengal Legislative Council a few years ago, and it is repeated publicly by some Moslem leaders in their speeches now-a-days. It is this attitude, which, for want of a better expression, I would call a spirit of conquest, religious and cultural, if not also territorial, that has been responsible for a series of events, which have estranged the two communities more and more, and of which I may be permitted to mention some that are within recent memory. The blood-curling Mopla atrocities of Malabar of the year 1921-22 were enquired into by the Congress Enquiry Committee, but no report of the enquiry was published on the ground that it would be unpolitic in national interests to give publicity to the findings. These outrages were followed by what is known as the Multan tragedy in connection with which even the Moslem leaders admitted that oppressions of the worst type had been perpetrated by Moslems on helpless Hindus. About this time or soon thereafter in 1923 took place the events connected with the conversion of the Malkana Rajputs to the Hindu fold, in the course of which, there were serious troubles at Agra, Muttra, Bharatpur, Saharanpur, etc. Soon after followed the Kohat tragedy, in the course of which, it is said, a whole population of twenty thousand were driven out of their homes, lands and avocations and had to migrate to a different area for food and shelter. In 1928, there were riots of gigantic magnitude in Calcutta and in Patna, and about the end of that year Swami Braddhananda was murdered. Then followed a number of murders of Arya Samajists, one notable case being the murder of Lala Nanak Chand of Delhi. The well-known Rangila Rasul agitation, which came in the train of these murders, brought about further riots and murders and M. Rajpal, the Publisher of the Rangila Rasul, after escaping from attacks on two occasions, succumbed to the third. The murder of Bholanath Sen in Calcutta is another instance. In and since 1932 there were and have been troubles in Hyderabad, Bhopal, Bahawalpur, Rampur and other States, and Hindu citizens of those States have felt aggrieved by reason of the differential treatment accorded to them, prejudicial to their interests, in respect of recruitment to public services, observance of religious practices, facilities for education, imposition of alien languages and so on. In some of these places, attempts on the part of the Hindus to ventilate their just grievances have been sought to be frustrated by measures which are repressive or coercive and in some others certain changes have been introduced in the name of 'reforms', but they more or less seek to perpetuate Moslem power. In Kashmir the Moslem population were virtually on the point of overthrowing the Ruler, and it was with considerable difficulty that a rapprochement was brought about. In 1935,

the Shahidganj agitation created a deplorable situation in and outside Lahore, involving serious loss of property and of lives. Lastly, deserve mention the communal riots of Meerut which took place only the other day, the origin and object of which I would rather not discuss.

In considering the present position of the Hindus, we in Bengal cannot forget our sister Province, the Punjab where, as here, the Hindus are in a minority. The anti-national and undemocratic Communal Decision has placed these two Provinces in a peculiarly unfortunate position. In the Punjab, just as much as in Bengal, measures have been adopted by the Ministry with Moslem Premiers at their head, to undo settled facts and vested rights, for the benefit of one community—at times, an artificial community which is the creature of a statute—regardless of their deleterious effects on all others. So far as the Punjab is concerned, my knowledge of the Province is too scanty to enable me to say anything with confidence. But having had occasion to study the Bills which have acquired the name of the Black Bills of that Province and considering their effects on the law as it stood before, I could only say that it was reformation with a vengeance, and it was time that the legislators should definitely cry halt.

Coming nearer home and to my own Province, in mentioning our grievances, I must give first rank and precedence to the Communal Decision. I propose to say very little about it because all vocabulary has been already exhausted in its condemnation. In the Montague-Chelmsford Report of 1918 they said,

"But we can see no reason to set up communal representation for Muhamadans in a Province where they form a majority of the voters".

In the Simon Report of 1930, it was said,

"We are clearly convinced that separate communal electorates serve to perpetuate political divisions on purely communal lines".

"Communal representation—the provision by law that particular religious community shall be represented in a popular legislature solely by members of its own body, with a guarantee as to how many communal seats there shall be—is an undoubted obstacle in the way of the growth of a sense of common citizenship".

With these authoritative declaration was eventually adopted, and the name of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald will go down in history as a great British Premier who to quote from the extracts I have just given, succeeded in 'perpetuating political divisions' and in imposing an "undoubted obstacle in the way of the growth of a sense of common citizenship". To Mr. Gandhi's fast also we are thankful for the final shape which the decision took, and if there was any doubt as to what exactly happened the position has now been made clear by the Mahatma himself. As the result of Mahatma Gandhi's intervention the decision led: (1) to the perpetuation of communal electorates for the depressed classes, by means of primary elections, and (2) to the creation in Province like Bengal, where there were practically no depressed classes, of 'Scheduled Castes' to whom class representation was conceded, such representation being carved not out of the total number of seats but out of the number allotted to the non-European, non-commercial and other non-special seats.

In Bengal the representation of non-scheduled caste Hindus was thus made 48 in a House of 250.

As regards the ratio, Sir Samuel Hoare, heckled, if I may use the word, by Sir N. N. Sircar and unable to point to any ground justifying the excess, could only say—

"We were left completely free to take what decision we thought fair; I am not prepared to go into the reasons for this decision".

This 'fair' decision has brought the Hindus of Bengal to a position which has made them utterly helpless and hopeless, and they feel that they are on the point of being made homeless as well. The communal ratio as regards public services had been fixed, without due regard to the contributions which the Hindus have made to the making of Bengal or to the requirements of the efficiency of the service themselves, irrespective of the question of literacy, but on the basis of the proportion of the numerical strength of the two communities, including women, children and even babes in arms, as residing within the boundaries of Bengal. The circumstances that have made the Bengal Hindus a minority community in Bengal have been ignored. The Hindus feel that they have had no fair deal in this matter.

— On the strength of this 'fair' decision the Ministry in Bengal have been able to get passed the new Calcutta Municipal Bill which assigns to Moslems additional seats in the Corporation of Calcutta, not on the basis of population, not on the



basis of eligibility to vote, nor again on the basis of the amounts of rates and taxes paid,—on no rational basis whatever. This indeed, is a very serious thing. Popular government does not mean that the government is to be popular with and to look to the interests of the party to which its members belong, but a government which will look to the interests and welfare of all those, irrespective of creed, colour or caste who are committed to its care.

The sad plight, into which the Hindus of Bengal have been placed, is a matter about which you will have to hear and form your conclusions and, if possible, devise a remedy. The state of things, such as it is, baffles description. During the last couple of years or so, reports have been constantly received from various parts of East Bengal, complaining of a persistent Anti-Hindu propaganda which, it has been alleged, is being carried on against the Hindus with the object of curbing, crushing and injuring Hindu interests, culture and claims. The most harrowing tales of crimes against person and property have come from some particular areas such as the districts of Noakhali, Pabna and Malda. The allegations are indeed very serious and call for immediate careful enquiry. Regret has been expressed in several quarters that the injudicious utterances, in many instances, highly provocative and communal, of some of the Moslem leaders have emboldened their followers to take up a most hostile attitude towards the Hindus. The request of the Premier, who has promised an enquiry into the allegations, a list of them—not exhaustive but illustrative and in respect of only one particular district, namely Noakhali, has been made by two of our members on the basis of authentic information received. They have, however, said :—

“The situation undoubtedly demands that an immediate enquiry should be instituted in a manner which will inspire the confidence of the Hindus. No enquiry will be effective unless persons who may come forward to give their evidence in support of the allegations are given an assurance that they will be protected against direct or indirect harassment and victimization. As a result of our tour in the districts and also of our prolonged discussions with various representatives, we have found that Hindus in certain parts of the province are living to-day in an atmosphere of panic and terror and no enquiry can ever be conducted without this assurance being openly given and scrupulously adhered to. In our present statement, for obvious reasons, we cannot disclose our evidence. We have neither the power to give protection to the persons involved nor the resources to prevent the evidence from being tampered with. But evidence will be adduced, if an honest enquiry is made, for every charge we make.”

Let us hope that the promise of enquiry which has been made by the Premier will be fulfilled. We shall anxiously await his report in the matter.

Fellow Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will pardon me for detaining you so long. The opportunity, which I have had to-day, is not one which is likely to come again, and that is my justification for taking so much of your time. Let me hope that with your help and under your guidance the Hindus will realise the situation they are in, that they will consolidate and rally under one Hindu banner, and that not looking to this body or that for the redress of their grievances, they will stand on their own legs and fight for their own cause,—a cause which is essentially righteous and in which they want nothing more but nothing less than what to them is justly due. They have no ill-will towards any of the other communities and they declare in the words of their esteemed President—

“If you come, with you ;  
If you don't, without you ;  
and if you oppose, in spite of you  
the Hindus will continue to fight  
for their  
National Freedom as best as  
they can.”

#### The Presidential Address

The following is the full text of the Presidential address delivered by *Sh. Feroz-ud-Din Khan Noon* :—

I gratefully acknowledge your appreciation of whatever services I have been able to render to the Hindu cause during the past two years of my tenure of this presidential office, which has persuaded you in calling upon me to preside over this session also for the third time in an unbroken succession. The hon-

consciousness of the overwhelming contrast between the stupendous amount of work ought to be done if we want to realise our noble aspirations in full and the relatively scanty output of work actually done by us all, weighs so heavily on my mind that you all know I wished and tried to transfer the task of leading the Hindu movement on some mightier Herculean shoulders and re-enter the rank of soldiers as a fighting unit. But, firstly, because the Commander also is a soldier in part and must obey the common will and secondly, because the very fact that the actual output of work falls far short of the enormous requirement makes it incumbent upon us all not to cease from standing by our posts against all odds under the most adverse circumstances which this our generation has to face and thirdly on account of the encouraging fact that thousands of eminent brave and devoted new workers have entered the field and assure me that they shall see to it in the spirit of a Pratap that the Hindu cause triumphs before this generation passes away and have actually given just a glimpse in fact of this their grim resolve during the Nizam Civil Resistance Struggle—do I yield to your kind and almost compelling pressure to accept the office of the President of the Hindu Mahasabha for the third time in spite of my failing health.

Within the limited space of a presidential address like this it is hardly possible to take even a cursory notice of the thousand and one events and problems which Hindudom had to face during this year locally, provincially and generally from Sind to Assam. The bloody orgies in which the Moslem mobs indulged only recently in the anti-Hindu riots at Sukkur and other places in Sind, the continuous campaign of raids committed by the Moslem tribes on the North-Western Frontier Provinces rendering Hindu life and property in daily danger; the looting of towns and villages by Moslem gangs proclaiming all along with drum-beating, "No Moslem need be disturbed, only Hindus will we loot"; hundreds of anti-Hindu riots and outrages committed by the Moslem fanatics at various places in the U. P., Bihar and Bengal;—this Moslem 'goondaism' on the one hand and the polished and parliamentary Moslem League on the other,—which, treating Hindu minority with the gentle civilities indicated above in Sind, Punjab and Bengal complain with righteous indignation that the Moslem minority is the only suffering saint throughout the world; then the Congress-League-Government negotiations which threaten to prove damaging to Hindu interests in a far more alarming degree than even the notorious Communal Decision has proved to be and above all the war situation which has given a handle to the Government to restore autocracy in all its pristine glory putting the hands of the clock of constitutional progress in India full fifty years back;—all these and several other events require to be dealt with in details. But I must leave them to be treated thus by the several resolutions which will have to be proposed in special connection with them and to the leading speakers who in cases may deal with them more authoritatively either owing to their local acquaintance with the details or their expert study of the special questions at hand. So that the little space at my disposal may be better utilized in dealing with those basic principles, policy and programme which should guide our movements in general and on which we must now concentrate our attention and efforts for at least a couple of years to come. Nevertheless while dealing with these, I shall, of course, have occasion to treat with some of those outstanding current events too, but only by way of illustrating their central message and bearing on the Hindu movement in general.

#### NIZAM STATE ARYA SATYAGRAHA

Of all these events which took place during the current year, the most outstanding one from the Hindu Sangathanist point of view and one which has an abiding message for our future policy and programme is, of course, the campaign of Civil Resistance which we had to carry on against the anti-Hindu policy of the Nizam Government for full six months during this year. It was a veritable crusade, as righteous as heroic. Our Arya Samaji brethren had to bear the brunt of the fight: not less than ten thousand Aryas joined the fight and fought so bravely as to demonstrate that the sacrificial fire lighted up by Maharshi Dayanand Swamiji, the first and foremost Hindu Sangathanist of our age burns brighter and brighter as days pass by and his mission has not fallen into the undeserving hands. Not less than five thousand civil resisters defied the anti-Hindu bans of the Nizam Government and kept up the fight with unflinching courage and admirable tact on the Hindu Mahasabha flank. But what is more encouraging to note from the pan-Hindu point of view is the fact that it was

not only the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha, though these two in the main led the struggle, but it was the whole Hindu brotherhood in general which joined hands and participated in the movement so whole-heartedly and with such fervor under the Hindu flag that without this and sacrifice throughout India we could not have carried on the struggle to such a successful termination. This fact to my mind constitutes the really abiding achievement we could record—apart from the detailed demands which the Hindu Sangathanists had compelled the Nizam Government to grant. For this Dharma Yuddha, this fight for the righteous Hindu cause proved to demonstration that in spite of castes and creeds, sects and sections, Hindudom as a whole does still pulsate with a common National Being. Behold, the thousands of Hindus leaving their hearths and homes, their nearest and dearest, marching on even at the risk of their lives to the rescue of their co-religionists and compatriots in the Nizam State whom they had perchance never seen or known personally. The Punjabees and Sindhis, Bengalis and Beharis, Marathis and Madrasis, Brahmins and Bhangis, Sanatanists, Arya Samajists, Sikhs, Jains, Lingaits, the rich and poor—every one who was proud of being a Hindu marched on under a common Hindu banner for the vindication of Hindu honour and faced untold miseries, outrageous riots, bayonets and lathi charges, hunger and thirst and even death but kept asserting to his last breath "Hindu Dharma-ki-jay, Hindusthan Hinduonka."

Take, for example, the case of St. Reddy or some of those Hindu Sangathanists who were ordered to be flogged or 'lathied' for raising shouts of "Bande Mataram" and "Hindusthan Hinduonka." For each stripe and lathi stroke they went on repeating "Bande Mataram" and "Hindusthan Hinduonka". Many brave son died under tortures. Amongst them was master Sadashiv Pathak, a Maratha boy under sixteen years of age who had to carry daily heavy stones on his head in spite of his bitter complaints that he suffered keen pangs in his chest, but he would not apologise and had to lay down his life in consequence. You will read such numerous examples of heroic devotion to the Hindu cause in the authenticated histories of this movement which are going to be published shortly by both by the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha. Why, there are present in this very pandal leaders and gentlemen of unimpeachable integrity who had themselves passed through such ordeals while they were under imprisonment in the Nizam jails as leaders or soldiers fighting out this 'Dharma Yuddha,' this crusade in vindication of Hindu faith, Hindu freedom and Hindu honour.

These crusaders received no pay nor were their families promised pensions. Many of them had resigned their services and professions earning in cases thousands a month. All of them knew they were unarmed, marching against an armed force and from the fate which those who preceded them they knew they will be tortured, starved, lathied and bayoneted too and yet they marched forth voluntarily, for there was no conscription but moral. You will be surprised to know that after the news of the outrageous 'lathi charges' at Aurangabad on the Hindu Sangathanist prisoners volunteers came in larger numbers to our *Shibirs* to register their names and some who had then only recently returned after serving their first term in the Nizam jails as civil resisters, insisted on being sent again to defy the anti-Hindu bans in the Nizam State.

The fact that such a Hindu Force consisting of fourteen to fifteen thousand civil resisters could be raised at the very first blast of the trumpet call by the Hindu Sangathanist party to-day is a lesson for us and for all those who dare to treat our demands lightly. These fifteen thousand Hindu Sangathanists constituted a force superior to those English or German forces who are now fighting in Europe, for their respective nations in moral courage and had it not been only a civil resistance movement and had we been in a position to face our opponents, bayonet for bayonet and rifle for rifle, chances are, they would have proved superior to them in an armed resistance too. But even if we let chances alone what is actual is also enough to encourage our Hindu Sangathanist Party in India with the brooding up consciousness of having won a moral victory and on the other hand to warn all anti-Hindu forces that they should henceforth think twice before they treat the resolutions of the Hindu Mahasabha as lightly as they were wont to do. What we resolved in heroic words at Nagpur or Sholapur last year has been translated into heroic deeds before we resemble at Calcutta on the eve of this ensuing year.

One more aspect of this struggle deserves special emphasis inasmuch as it is sure to exercise a liberating influence on the future of the Hindu movement in general. The Nizam Civil Resistance Campaign has broken the damning spell

which weighed like an incubus on the Hindu mind for some twenty years in the past that no cause, however righteous it may be in itself from the Hindu point of view, should be deemed righteous unless the Congress was pleased to certify it as "National" which word in ninety-nine cases out of hundred proved to be tantamount with the word "anti-Hindu" and that no movement on an all-India scale should be or could be carried out successfully unless it was sponsored and let on by the Congress Flag. Even in the case of the murderous Moslem riots at Kohat or the general massacres of Hindus perpetrated by the Moplas from village to village in Malabar the Hindus did not even dare to condemn the Moslem fanaticism on a pan-Hindu scale all over India, because the step was not certified by the Congress as "National." The Congress wanted to play the same game even in this case and diabolically anathematised the Nizam Civil Resistance Movement as 'communal,' as 'anti-national.' But this time the Hindu Sangathanist Party had an ideology of its own conception of what is really national or otherwise interpreted in the light of reason that had freed itself from the blind and unquestioning subservience to any inner voices which on their own admission were sure passports to Himalayan errors or new lights which scarcely made darkness visible and subservience to any Papal bulls issued by the Congress Church and marched on to the rescue of their Hindu co-religionists and compatriots in the Nizam State led on by the Hindu Flag. The movement rapidly spread throughout the length and breadth of the country from Peshawar to Madras. On that one single evening, for example, of the "Nizam Nishadins Day" as well as "Hindu Nation Day," not less than a crore of Hindus were found gathered under the Hindu flag in capital cities and towns throughout India in pursuance of the mandate of the Hindu Sangathanist Party to back up the Hindu movement which seemed only to flourish the more the Congress anathematised and opposed it as communal and anti-national.

Why did the Congress oppose it? The Congress wanted to reform the States: well was not Hyderabad the biggest and yet the worst ruled autocratic State in India? It was at least as worth while to introduce constitutional reforms and restore civil liberties in the Nizam State as in the tiny Taluka-like State of Rajkot. Did not Gandhiji want us to believe that the Reform movement of that petty Rajkot had assumed the magnitude of an all-India question, that the whole Indian Ocean was set on fire in the tiny tea cup of Mr. Veerawala? And yet the question of demanding constitutional reforms for nearly a crore of subjects in the Nizam State which the Hindu Mahasabha had undertaken and was fighting for, seemed to him so remote and unconnected with the Indian question that he could not spare even as much sympathy or interest as he would for the Abyssinians in Africa, for the Spanish or the Czechs in Europe. Not only Gandhiji but no Congressite, neither the backward nor the forward nor the inward block or their heads stepped out to condemn the Nizam Government even after the inhuman lathi-charges on the Hindu civil resisters at Aurangabad Jail or the bloody riots at Hyderabad. Then, again, did not the Congress patronize civil liberties? Was it not a fact that under the Nizam Government even the life and property of millions of Hindus was held in daily danger, no freedom either of speech or worship or association worth the name existed? Then why did not the Congress join hands with the Hindu Sangathanists, who were engaged in a life and death struggle to secure these civil liberties in the State or at least pass a resolution to support the justice of their demands? Was it because the Hindu Sangathanists went to the field as Hindus instead of as Indians?

Well, it may be a sin for a Hindu to do even a good thing as a Hindu expect on the election day when he has to vote for a Congressite who has to state himself as a Hindu, as a unit in the Hindu electorate!—But when the Moslems in Kashmir rose with the help of outside Moslems in an armed revolt against the Hindu king, demanding representation for the Moslems as Moslems,—did not Gandhiji write as a born democrat, that if the Hindu king of Kashmir could not satisfy and allay the discontent of the Moslems who formed 85 percent of his subjects he had no moral right to rule but should forthwith abdicate and retire to Kashmir? Well, more than 85 per cent of the subjects of the Nizam are Hindus, they had only resorted to unarmed civil resistance to the intolerable religious, cultural and political persecutions, with the help of their co-religionists outside the State, but did Gandhiji, the born democrat, advise the Nizam too to abdicate and retire to Mecca? No, on the contrary, he wrote in so many words that he was overwhelmingly concerned throughout the Civil Resistance Movement "not to embarrass His Majestied Highness the Nizam."

I can recount a hundred and one petty mischiefs also which Congressites of the "national" brand were busy playing to defeat this Hindu Sangathanist movement against the anti-Hindu policy of the Nizam Government, but that is not what I intend to deal with here. Suffice it to say that the Hindu Mahasabha could secure the sympathy even of some M. P.s in England and persuade them to and protest against the horrible oppression at the Aurangabad jail and during the Hyderabad riots the Hindus had to undergo—but no Congress Ministers in all the seven provinces touched the subject even with a pair of tongs, initiated not even a discussion in the Congress or Indian Legislatures, not uttered a word in defence of the Hindus against the Nizam Government although these very Congress Ministers could threaten to resign altogether in the case of the pettiest Rajkot affair.

The moral is plain and must be plainly told. So long as the Congress continues to hug to the 'Pseudo-National' ideology as it does to-day, its policy is bound to be anti-Hindu, is bound to betray Hindu interests howsoever just and legitimate they be. Just think; if the Hindu Electorate had voted for the Hindu Sangathanist Representative and thus had Hindu Mahasabha Ministries in Bombay, Madras and other parts—could they have remained so callously indifferent to the oppression the Hindus had to undergo in Hyderabad? What tremendous pressure they could have brought to bear on the Nizam Government in staying its hand from out-Heroding Herod.

It was essentially to emphasize this point that whenever the Hindus are oppressed as Hindus and especially at the hands of the Moslems the Congress simply will not raise a finger in their defence, that the Hindu Sangathanist must take up the task of defending themselves on their own shoulders and if they mean to do so they can do it in spite of the Congress indifference or even opposition, that the Nizam Civil Resistance Movement was launched by the Hindu Sangathanist leaders independently of the Congress under a Hindu Flag. The struggle was a test case to begin with the prospective Pan-Hindu Movement and we Hindu Sangathanists were not only not Rajkoted at Hyderabad, but on the contrary came out with flying colours out of this testing ordeal inasmuch as we have recovered and actualised through this struggle our Racial and Cultural homogeneity, our real National self which under a swoon of self-forgetfulness during the last hundred years or so was all but obliterated.

One word about the political Reforms announced by the Nizam Government and the undertaking it has given to grant the Hindus Civil, Cultural and Religious liberties in consideration of which the Civil Resistance Movement was suspended by the Hindu Maha Sabha in the spirit of responsive co-operation and accommodation for which H. E. H. the Nizam had graciously pleaded in his announcement. The Hindu Maha Sabha thanks the Nizam Government for the general amnesty of all Hindu Civil Resisters. It was a step in the right direction. But since then the Nizam Government has not moved as quickly as it ought to have done in introducing the Reforms in themselves inadequate and halting in practical operation. The Maha Sabha is extremely anxious to open out some way to peaceful constitutional progress and restore lasting amity between the Hindus and Moslems in the state and therefore, it begs to draw the pointed attention of the Nizam to the fact that any unreasonable delay in putting the Reforms in actual operation cannot but prove dangerous and give rise to discontent which is perfectly avoidable if but the Nizam Government takes time by his forelock before it is too late. And the second thing that is most urgent is the fact that the Nizam Government should hold some of the fanatical local Moslem officials in leash who counting on an ultimate support from the Central Government are still harassing the Hindus every now and then.

If the local fanatics are strictly dealt with by the Government in some cases the Moslem sealots will soon come to their senses all over the State. I hope these warnings will be taken by the Nizam Government in the amicable spirit which prompts me in sounding them.

The splendid and sustained struggle the Hindus have carried on at Delhi in connection with the Shiva Mandir affair deserves also an All-India homage. It too sounds the same warning that the Congress does not and will not and cannot defend a Hindu-cause against an anti-Hindu aggression. But in spite of it all the overwhelming suffering and sacrifice in men and money in connection with the Shiva Mandir at Delhi shall not go in vain if but only those Hindus who pledge to safeguard Hindu interests and are not enslaved to the Congress ticket, are met by the Hindus on a Hindu Sangathanist ticket to represent them to the Congress.

tion. The Pan-Hindu spirit which this struggle has lit up will prove the real Shiva. On the site where stood the tiny mud-hut which has been so high-handedly destroyed, I already see rising before my mind's eye a magnificent temple of Shiva and thousands of pilgrims crowding to worship at it before a decade passes away. Successful resistance the Hindus offered in defence of their legitimate rights at Khamgaon, Mahad, Bhagalpur and several other places during this year are also full of significance and testify to the fact that the spirit of self-assertion is consolidating the Hindus under the Hindu Maha Sabha's lead. But I must not lose myself in the labyrinths of detailed events any longer and address myself to the chief task. I have set before me in this address of outlining the fundamental basis and general policy and programme on which I wish we all should concentrate our attention for at least a couple of years to come.

It is encouraging to note that thousands of those who brought up from their early days under the influence of the pseudo nationalistic ideology current in the Congress camp and were consequently so thoroughly prejudiced against anything that was connected with Hindutva that they militated against the very word Hindu as something superstitious, out of date, unworthy of a progressive patriot to own, should now be evincing a genuine desire to know all about the Hindu Maha Sabha, its policy and immediate programme. The case of no less a personality than Mr. Tairree whose sad death all Bombay lamented only a couple of months ago can serve as a case in point. He was reputed to be one amongst the first ten citizens of Bombay, a rationalist of rationalists, one of the foremost Congressites. Yet after I had casually explained to him the Hindu Sanghathanist ideology as expounded in my Nagpur speech, he publicly confessed that the rationalism which made him shun the word Hindu or Hindu Sanghathan as a crass superstition was itself the crassest of superstitions. He not only joined our party but proudly accepted the presidency of the Bombay Provincial Hindu Sabha. Throughout my extensive tours I have come across thousands of the intellectual class who simply militated against the Hindu idea at its first mention and when cogently explained rubbed their eyes in a doubting mood at its second mention and half of them pressed for a closer acquaintance with it while the other half simply capitulated at its third mention. There has grown of late enormous curiosity throughout India to know something of the Hindu Maha Sabha, its aims and as to what is its programme and this demand at times comes from foreign countries as well. That is the reason why I wish to devote this address mainly to enumerate categorically the leading principles and tenets on which the Hindu movement is based and to outline its general policy and some outstanding details of its immediate programme. It will serve as a cogent statement of our case and may be utilized as a basis for a manifesto in future to an organized Hindu party in the Legislatures as well as a handy guide to our workers and propagandists in the press and the platform. It may involve some repetition of a truth as also of a falsehood as about the only means to cast the mentality of a whole people into a required mould. As long as falsehood holds the propagandistic field truth must speak out to silence it as many times as the former repeats a lie.

The following are some of the basic tenets and aspects of the Hindu movement :—

(a) Every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this Bharat Bhumi, this land from the Indus to the Seas, as his Father Land as well as his Holy Land :— i. e., the land of the origin of his religion, the cradle of his Faith.

The followers therefore of Vaidicism, Sanatanism, Jainism, Buddhism, Lingaism, Shikhism, the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, the Devanama, the Prarthana Samaj, and such other religions of Indian origin are Hindus and constitute Hindudom i.e., the Hindu people as a whole.

Consequently, the so-called aboriginal or hilltribes also are Hindus ; because India is their Father Land as well as their Holy Land, whatever form of Religion, or worship they follow.

This definition therefore, should be recognised by the Government and made the test of Hindutva in enumerating the population of Hindus in the Government census to come.

(b) The word Hindu is not of a foreign origin nor connected with the advent of the Moslems in India, as was erroneously suspected for a time under the mischievous influence of some alien scribes. Our Land and our people were at times called Sapta Sindhus even by our Vaidic Rishis.

Thousands of years before Mahomed, the Moslem Prophet was born, the

ancient Babylonians knew us as "Sindhus" and the ancient Zenda Avesta refers to us as Hindus. One of our province on this side of the Indus has retained this ancient appellation of our Land and people down to this day as "Sindhu Desh" and its people as "Sindhu (Sindh)". In our modern Prakrits the Sanskrit 'Sa' is often transformed into 'Aa'. Just as the word 'Keshari' in Sanskrit or 'Kishana' has been transformed into Hindu Prakrit as 'Keshari' and 'Kasha' even so the word 'Sindhu' has been transformed into modern Prakrits as 'Hindu'. Those who want to have the point exhaustively and conclusively treated may read my book 'Hindutva'.

(c) Hinduism, Hindutva and Hindudom :—In expounding the Ideology of the Hindu movement it is absolutely necessary to have a correct grasp of the terms. From the word "Hindu" has been coined the word "Hinduism" in English. It means the schools or system of religion the Hindus follow. The second word 'Hindutva' is far more comprehensive and refers not only to the religious aspect of the Hindu people as the word "Hinduism" does but comprehends even their cultural, linguistic, social, and political aspects as well. It is more or less akin to "Hindu Polity" and its nearly exact translation would be "Hinduness". The third word "Hindudom" means the Hindu people spoken of collectively. It is a collective name for the Hindu World, just as Islamic denotes the Moslem World.

(d) We Hindus are a Nation by ourselves :—In my presidential speech at Nagpur I had, for the first time in the history of our recent politics, pointed out in bold relief that the whole Congress Ideology was vitiated 'ab initio' by the unwitting assumption that the territorial unity, a common habitat, was the only factor that constituted and ought to and must constitute a Nation. This conception of a Territorial Nationality has since then received a rude shock in Europe itself from which it was imported wholesale to India and the present War has justified my assertion by exploding the myth altogether. All Nations carved out to order on the Territorial design without any other common bond to mould each of them into a national being have gone to rack and ruin, tumbled down like a house of cards. Poland and Czechoslovakia will ever serve as a stern warning against any such efforts to frame heterogeneous peoples into such hotchpotch Nations, based only on the shifting sands of the conception of Territorial Nationality, not cemented by any Cultural, Racial or Historical affinities and consequently having no common will to incorporate themselves into a Nation. These treaty-Nations broke up at the first opportunity they got : the German part of them went over to Germany, the Russian to Russia, Czechs to Czechs and Poles to Poles. The cultural, linguistic, historical and such other organic affinities proved stronger than the territorial one. Only those Nations have persisted in maintaining their National unity and identity during the last three to four centuries in Europe which had developed Racial, Linguistic, Cultural and such other organic affinities in addition to their Territorial unity or even at times in spite of it and consequently will be to be homogeneous National units—such as England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal etc.

Judged by any and all of these tests which go severally and collectively to form such an homogeneous and organic Nation, in India we Hindus are marked out as an abiding Nation by ourselves. Not only we own a common Fatherland, a Territorial unit, but what is scarcely found anywhere else in the world, we have a common Holy Land which is identified with our common Father-Land. This Bharat Bhumi, this Hindusthan, India is both our 'Pitribhu' and 'Pujyabhu'. Our patriotism therefore is doubly sure. Then we have common affinities—cultural, religious, historical, linguistic, and racial—which through the process of countless centuries of association and assimilation moulded us into a homogeneous and organic Nation and above all induced a will to lead a corporate and common National life. The Hindus are no treaty Nation—but an organic National Being.

One more pertinent point must be met as it often misleads our Congressite Hindu brethren in particular. The homogeneity that welds a people into a National Being does not imply the total absence of all internal differences religious, Racial or Linguistic of sects and sections amongst themselves. It only means that they differ more from other people as a National unit than they differ amongst themselves. Even the most unitarian Nations of to-day—say the British or the French—cannot be free from any religious, linguistic, cultural, racial or other differences, sects or sections or even some antipathies existing amongst themselves. National homogeneity connotes oneness of a people in relation to the contrast they present to any other people as a whole.

It is a Nation, in spite of thousand and one differences within our fold, and

bound by such religious, cultural, historical, racial, linguistic and other affinities in common as to stand out as a definitely homogeneous people as soon as we are placed in contrast with any other non-Hindu people—say the English or Japanese or even the Indian Moslems. That is the reason why to-day we the Hindus from Kashmere to Madras and Sindh to Assam will be a Nation by ourselves—while the Indian Moslems are on the whole more inclined to identify themselves and their interests with Moslems outside India than Hindus who live next door, like the Jews in Germany.

Some well meaning but simple minded Hindus amuse themselves with the thought and hope against hope that in as much as the majority of Indian Moslems also are in fact allied to us by race and language and had gone over to the Moslem fold in living memory of this very generation, they could easily be persuaded to acknowledge this homogeneity and even blood relation with the Hindus and merge themselves into a common National being if but we only remind them of these affinities and appeal to them in their name. These innocent souls are really to be pitied. As if the Moslems do not know of it all. The fact is that the Moslems know of these affinities all but too well: the only difference to be taken into account being that while the Hindus love these affinities which bind a Hindu to a Hindu and to dwell on them with pride—the Moslems hate the very mention of them and are trying to eradicate the very memory of it all. Some of them fabricate histories and geneologies to connect their origin with Arabians or Turks; they are trying to carve out a separate language for themselves and graft it as best as they can on the Arabian stock; they are carrying on a campaign against the Hindu family names such as "Tambe" and "Modak" which in parts like the Kokan convert-Moslems still bear and replace them by Arabian ones and are bent on widening the cleavage deeper and broader by removing every trace which may remind them of having once something in common with the Hindu stock. Their religious and theocratic traditions join hands in impressing upon their mind that Hindustan is not and cannot be a Dar-ul-Islam, their country which they may love until and unless the Hindus—the kafirs—are either converted to a man to Islam or are reduced to helotage paying the Zizia to some would-be Moslem Sovereignty over this land. The very word "Hindusthan" stinks in their nostrils. I am not referring to these items here in any spirit of either condemnation or justification. I am telling the simple fact which no Moslem can honestly contest that Islam as a whole wants on a deliberate design to assert itself in India as a Nation altogether heterogenous with the Hindus and having nothing in common with them. Consequently, it ought to be clear even to these well meaning Hindu simpletons that this refusal of the Indian Moslems to merge in a common National unit leaves the Hindus, negatively too, as a Nation by themselves.

(c) Swarajya to the Hindus must mean only that "Rajya" in which their "Swatva", their "Hindutva" can assert itself without being overlooked by any non-Hindu people, whether they be Indian Territorials or extra Territorials. Some Englishmen are and may continue to be territorially born Indians. Can therefore the overlordship of these Anglo-Indians be a "Swarajya" to the Hindus? Aurangzeb or Tipu were hereditary Indians, nay, were the sons of converted Hindu mothers. Did that mean that the rule of Aurangzeb or Tipu was a "Swarajya" to the Hindus? No! although they were territorially Indians they proved to be the worst enemies of Hindudom and therefore, a Shivaji, a Gobindsingh a Pratap or the Peshwas had to fight against the Moslem domination and establish a real Hindu Swarajya.

Consequently, under the present circumstances too all that an Indian National State can mean is that the Moslem minority in India will have the right to be treated as equal citizens, enjoying equal protection and civic rights in proportion to their population. The Hindu majority will not encroach on the legitimate rights of any non-Hindu minority. But in no case can the Hindu majority resign its right which as a majority it is entitled to exercise under any Democratic and legitimate constitution. The Moslem minority in particular has not obliged the Hindus by remaining in minority and therefore, they must remain satisfied with the status they occupy and with the legitimate share of civic and political rights that is their proportionate due. It would be simply preposterous to endow the Moslem minority with the right of exercising a practical veto on the legitimate rights and privileges of the majority and call it a "Swarajya". The Hindus do not want a change of masters, are not going to struggle and fight and die only to replace an "Alien"



by an Aurangzeb simply because the latter happens to be born within Indian borders, but they want henceforth to be masters themselves in their own house, in their own Land.

(f) Consequently, the name "Hindustan" must continue to be the appellation of our Country:—such other names as India, Hind, etc. being derived from the same original word Sindhu may be used not only to signify the same sense—the land of Hindus, a country which is the abode of the Hindu Nation. Aryavarta, Bharat-Bhumi and such other names are of course the ancient and the most cherished epithets of our Mother Land and will continue to appeal to the cultured elite. In this insistence that the Mother Land of the Hindus must be called but "Hindusthan", no encroachment or humiliation is implied in connection with any of our non-Hindu countrymen. Our Parsee and Christian countrymen are already too akin to us culturally and are too patriotic and the Anglo-Indians too sensible to refuse to fall in line with us Hindus on so legitimate a ground. So far as our Moslem countrymen are concerned it is useless to conceal the fact that some of them are already inclined to look upon this molehill also as an insuperable mountain in their way to Hindu-Moslem unity. But they should remember that the Moslems do not dwell only in India nor are the Indian Moslems the only heroic remnants of the Faithful in Islam. China has crores of Moslems. Greece, Palestine and even Hungary and Poland have thousands of Moslems amongst their nationals. But being there a minority, only a community, their existence in these countries has never been advanced as a ground to change the ancient names of these countries which indicate the abodes of those races whose overwhelming majority own the land. The country of the Poles continues to be Poland and of the Grecians as Greece. The Moslems there did not or dared not to distort them but are quite content to distinguish themselves as Polish-Moslems or Grecian-Moslems or Chinese-Moslems when occasion arises. So also our Moslem countrymen may distinguish themselves nationally or territorially whenever they want, as "Hindusthanee Moslems" without compromising in the least their separateness as a religious or cultural entity. Nay, the Moslems have been calling themselves as "Hindusthanis" ever since their advent in India, of their own accord.

But if in spite of it all some irracible Moslem sections amongst our countrymen object even to this name of our country but that is no reason why we should play cowards to our own conscience. We Hindus must not betray or break up the continuity of our Nation from the Sindhus in Rigvedic days to the Hindus of our own generation which is implied in "Hindusthan" the accepted appellation of our Mother Land. Just as the land of the Germans is Germany, of the English England, of the Turks Turkiستان, of the Afghans Afghanistan—even so we must have it indelibly impressed on the map of the earth for all times to come a "Hindusthan"—the land of the Hindus.

(g) The Pan-Hindu flag:—The "Kundalini Kripanakita" Gurus Flag shall be the Flag of the Hindu Nation with its OM, the Swastik and the Sword. It appeals to sentiments cherished by our race ever since the Vedic days. Those who like to realise the inner spirit and know the 'raison d'être' of its design and the symbols would do well to read the special tract I have written styled "the Pan-Hindu Dhvaj."

It must be emphasised in this connection that all those Hindu flags other than this which are current amongst the Hindus as the colours of the different constituents which go to form our Pan-Hindu brotherhood such as the Sanatanists, the Sikhs, the Jains, the Aryas, etc., will be respected by every Hindu as his own inasmuch as they are but different manifestations of the common Pan-Hindu spirit.

Nor should it be supposed that the Hindu Flag implies any inherent antagonism to the several colours of our non-Hindu countrymen. The Moslems are welcome to have their own religious colours to represent their own community. In short, we shall respect any Flag which any section of our countrymen adopt whether religious or political, whether it is the Moslem League Flag or the Congress Tri-colours or the Red one,—so long as it continues to respect in return the Pan-Hindu Flag and does not antagonise it but continues as allied colours. But Hindudom as a whole will be represented by the Pan-Hindu Flag alone.

(h) The Sanskrit shall be our "Debbhasa" our sacred language and the "Sanskrit Nishtha" Hindi which is derived from Sanskrit and draws its nourishment from the latter, is our "Rashtrabhasa" our current National language:—

Besides being the richest and the most cultured of the ancient languages of the world, to us Hindus the Sanskrit is the holiest tongue of tongues. Our scriptures, history, philosophy and culture have their roots so deeply imbedded in the Sanskrit literature that it forms veritably the brain of our Race. Mother of the majority of our mother tongues, she has suckled the rest of them at her breast. All Hindu languages current to-day whether derived from Sanskrit or grafted on to it can only grow and flourish on the sap of life they imbibe from the Sanskrit. The Sanskrit language therefore, must ever be an indispensable constituent of the classical course for Hindu youths.

In adopting the Hindi as the National tongue of Hindudom no humiliation or any invidious distinction is implied as regards other provincial tongues. We are all as attached to our Provincial tongues as to Hindi and they will all grow and flourish in their respective spheres. In fact some of them are to-day more progressive and richer in literature. But nevertheless, taken all in all, the Hindi can serve the purpose of a National Pan-Hindu Language best. It must also be remembered that the Hindi is not made a National Language to order. The fact is that long before either the English or even the Moslems stepped in India the Hindi in its general form had already come to occupy the position of a National tongue throughout Hindusthan. The Hindu pilgrim, the tradesman, the tourist, the soldier, the Pandit travelled up and down from Bengal to Sindh and Kashmere to Rameshwar by making himself understood from locality to locality through Hindi. Just as the Sanskrit was the National language of the Hindu intellectual world even so Hindi has been for at least a thousand years in the past the National Indian Tongue of the Hindu community. Added to that and as a consequence of that we find even to-day that it is understood and even spoken as a mother tongue by a fair larger number of people than is the case with any other Hindu language. Consequently it must be made compulsory for every Hindu student through secondary schools at any rate to learn Hindi as his Pan-Hindu National language without neglecting in the least his training in his provincial mother tongue.

By Hindi we of course mean the pure "Sanskrit Niस्था" Hindi, as we find it for example in the "Satyarth Prakash" written by Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati. How simple and untainted with a single unnecessary foreign word is that Hindi and how expressive withal. It may be mentioned in passing that Swami Dayanandji was about the first Hindu leader who gave conscious and definite expression to the view that Hindi should be the Pan-Hindu National language of India. "This Sanskrit Niस्था" Hindi has nothing to do with that hybrid, the so-called Hindusthani which is being hatched up by the Wardha scheme. It is nothing short of a linguistic monstrosity and must be ruthlessly suppressed. Not only that but it is our bounden duty to oust out as ruthlessly all unnecessary alien words whether Arabian or English, from every Hindu tongue—whether provincial or dilectical. We are not against the English or any other language nay, we insist on the study of the English as an indispensable necessity and a profitable passport to world literature. But we must not allow the influx of alien words into our language without checking their pass and testing their necessity. Our Hindu brethren in Bengal are especially to be congratulated upon in this connection because the Bengali literature is admirably free from any such uncleaned admixture of unnecessary alien words which cannot be said regarding our other Provincial tongues and literature.

(i) Nagari shall be the National Script of Hindudom :—

Our Sanskrit alphabetical order is phonetically about the most perfect which the world has yet devised and almost all our current Indian scripts already follow it. The Nagari Script too follows this order. Like the Hindi language the Nagari Script too has already been current for centuries all over India amongst the Hindu literary circles for some two thousands years at any rate in the past and was even popularly nick-named as the "Shastri Lipi", the script of our Hindu Scriptures. With a little touch here and there it could be reformed so as to render it as suitable to modern mechanical printing as the Roman script. Such a Reform movement was set on foot in Maharashtra about some forty years ago by Mr. Vaidya and others. An organised movement later on under my lead met with an amount of practical success and has already popularised it. I strongly recommend that as an immediate step to popularise Nagari as our National Script, all our Hindu papers in different provinces should begin to publish at least a couple of columns of their provincial languages in Nagari script. It is a matter

of common knowledge that if Bengali or Gujarathi is printed in Nagari it is more or less understood by readers in several other provinces. To have only one common language throughout Hindusthan at a stroke is impracticable and unwise. But to have the Nagari script as the only common script throughout Hindudom is much more feasible. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the different Hindu scripts current in our different provinces have a future of their own and may flourish side by side with the Nagari. All that is immediately done and indispensable in the common interest of Hindudom as a whole that the Nagari Script must be made a compulsory subject along with the Hindi language in every school in the case of Hindu students.

It is interesting to remind you here how two prominent Congress Presidents proposed to solve this problem of a National tongue and a National Script. Pandit Nehru thinks, leaving even Maulavi Abul Kalam Azad far behind who only proposes Hindusthani which he assures us is tantamount to Urdu,—that the highly Arabianised Urdu of the Aligarh School or the Usmania University School is best fitted to be the National Language of India including of course some twenty-eight crores of Hindus, while Desha Gaurav Subhash Babu improving upon the situation beat even Panditji's ingenuity hollow by proposing from the Presidential chair of the Indian National Congress that Roman Script would suit India as the best National Script. That is how the Congress ideology approaches things National! Roman Script to be the National Script of India!—How eminently practicable, to say the least! Your Basumat, Ananda Bazar Patrika and all Bengali papers to appear every day in Roman Script! The Bande Mataram Song to be printed in this new National style and the Gita to begin with in this following attractive setting as "Dharma Kahetire Kurukahetire Shama-vetah yuyutsavah" and so on. It is true as Subhas Babu says that Kemal Pasha abolished the Arabian Script as unsuited to print and took to Roman Script. But this fact has a lesson for our Mahomedan zealots who want the Urdu Script, that is, this very Arabian style, to thrust even on the Hindus as an up-to-date National Script and has no connection with the Hindus. Kemal Pasha took to the Roman Script because the Turks had nothing better of their own to fall back upon. The Andamanes pick up Kauris and make a necklace of them,—but is that the reason why the Kuber also should do the same? We Hindus should rather call upon Arabia and Europe to adopt the Nagari Script and Hindi language. Such a proposal should not sound very impracticable to such inveterate optimist at any rate who seriously advance it as a very practical proposal to make Urdu the National language of the Marathas and to expect all our Arya Samaj Gurukuls to study the Vedas in Roman Script!

(j) The Hindu Maha Sabha is a National Organisation of Hindudom:—

It has come to my notice that a very large section of English educated Hindus holds back from joining the Hindu Maha Sabha and political circles in India and outside in general, feel themselves totally unconcerned about it under the erroneous idea that it is an exclusively religious organization—something like a Christian Mission. Nothing could be far from the truth.

The Hindu Maha Sabha is not a Hindu Mission. It leaves Religious questions regarding theism, monotheism, Pan-theism or even atheism to be discussed and determined by the different Hindu schools of religious persuasions. It is not Hindu-Dharma Maha Sabha—but a Hindu-National Maha Sabha. Consequently, by its very constitution, it is debarred to associate itself exclusively as a partisan with any particular religious school or sect even within the Hindu fold. As a national Hindu body it will of course propagate and defend the National Hindu Church comprising each and all religions of Hindusthani origin against any non-Hindu attack or encroachment. But the sphere of its activity is far more comprehensive than that of an exclusively religious body. The Hindu Maha Sabha identifies itself with the National life of Hindudom in all its entirety in all social, economical, cultural and above all political aspects and is pledged to protect and promote all that contributes to the freedom, strength and glory of the Hindu Nation; and as an indispensable means to that end to attain Purna Swarajya, absolute political Independence of Hindusthan by all legitimate and proper means.

(k) The Hindu Maha Sabha must continue its mission even after Hindusthan is politically free:—Many a superficial critic seems to fancy that the Maha Sabha was only organised to serve as a make weight, as a re-action checkmating the

Moslem League or the anti-Hindu policy of the present leader of the Congress and will be out of court or cease automatically to function as soon as it is shorn of this spurious excuse to exist. But if the aims and object of the Maha Sabha mean anything it is clear that it was not the outcome of any frothy effusion, any fussy agitation to remove a grievance here or oppose a seasonal party there. The fact is that every organism whether individual or social which is living and deserves to survive throws out offensive and defensive organs as soon as it is brought to face adversely changing environments. The Hindu Nation too as soon as it recovered and freed itself from the suffocating grip of the pseudo-Nationalistic ideology of the Congress brand developed a new organ to battle in the struggle for existence under the changed conditions of modern age. This was the Hindu Maha Sabha. It grew up of a fundamental necessity of National life and not of any ephemeral incident. The constructive side of its aims and objects make it amply clear that its mission is as abiding as the life of the Nation itself. But that apart, even the day to day necessity of adapting its policy to the everchanging political current make it incumbent on Hindudom to have an exclusively Hindu organization independent of any moral or intellectual servility or subservience to any non-Hindu or jointly representative institution, to guard Hindu interest and save them from being jeopardised. It is not so only under the present political subjection of Hindusthan but it will be all the more necessary to have some such exclusively Hindu organization, some such Hindu Mahasabha in substance whether it is identical with this present organization or otherwise to serve as a watch-tower at the gates of Hindusthan for at least a couple of centuries to come, even after Hindusthan is partially or wholly free and a National Parliament controls its political destiny.

Because, unless something altogether cataclysmic in nature upsets the whole political order of things in the world which practical politics cannot envisage today, all that can be reasonably expected in immediate future is that we Hindus may prevail over England and compel her to recognise India as a self-governing unit with the status contemplated in the Westminster statute. Now a National Parliament in such a self-Governing India can only reflect the electorate as it is, the Hindu and the Muslims as we find them, their relations a bit bettered, perhaps a bit worsened. No realist can be blind to the probability that the extra territorial designs and the secret urge goading on the Moslems to transform India into a Moslem state may at any time confront the Hindusthani state even under self-government either with a Civil War or treacherous overtures to alien invaders by the Moslems. Then again, there is every likelihood that there will ever continue at least for a century to come a danger of fanatical riots, the scramble for services, Legislative seats, weightages out of proportion to their population on the part of the Moslem Minority and consequently a constant danger threatening internal peace. To checkmate this probability which if we are wise we must always keep in view even after Hindusthan attains the status of self-governing country, a powerful and exclusive organization of Hindudom like the Hindu Maha Sabha will always prove a sure and devoted source of strength, a reserve force for the Hindus to fall back upon to voice their grievances more effective than the joint Parliament can do, to scent danger ahead, to warn the Hindus in time against it and to fight out if needs be any treacherous design to which the joint state itself may unwittingly fall a victim.

The History of Canada, of Palestine, of the movement of the young Turks will show you that in every state where two or more such conflicting elements as the Hindus and Moslems in India happen to exist as constituents, the wiser of them has to keep its exclusive organization in tact, strong and watchful to defeat any attempt at betrayal or capture of the National State by the opposite party; especially so if that party has extra territorial affinities, religious or cultural, with alien bordering states. This tussle between such constituents of such a state must continue till slowly if ever they all learn to get themselves merged, by developing a spirit of corporate patriotism, into a consolidated Nation. If the Hindus take this realistic truth to heart they will try their utmost to consolidate and strengthen the Pan-Hindu organisation which is already gathering force and has struck its roots deep in the Hindu soil. The nearer you are to Swarajya the more indispensable grows the necessity of a strong and consolidated Pan-Hindu organization or rather the stronger grows the Pan-Hindu organization the nearer it takes you to real "Swa-Rajya."

I have so far dealt with some of the basic principles and tenets and set out

the National and Political ideals of the Hindu Sanghathan movement as I perceive them. But the very fact that we have still to frame, emphasize and propagate the very ideals and ideology of the Hindu movement added to the fact that they imply an entire re-orientation of the Hindu people so as to revolutionise the conception of the Indian state and its formation as we find it to-day, shows how we have hardly taken a step ahead and how strenuous and sustained a struggle we have yet to undergo before we are able to realise the goal, the creation of an Independent Hindusthan as we define it. Once the ideal is fixed, it is this struggle that matters most. And we must, therefore, chalk out as urgently as possible the lines on which our struggle can be carried on with the greatest effect and if possible with the least resistance.

It must be noted also that although the ideal remains fixed the struggle to realise it can scarcely be on a straight line. We have now to confront, now to compromise: now to fight on, now to fall back and keep marking time. At times we shall have to ally ourselves on a given point with one of our opponents and then to oppose the former ally. This very inconsistency in detail resorted to in a long-drawn and life and death struggle to reach a goal is consistent enough if but it leads us on the whole irresistably onward and onward to the great ideal we aim to realise. The policy I am going to outline should also be viewed from this tactical perspective. It is only related to our present circumstances and should not be taken as final. As our movement goes on gathering strength we may soon arrive at a point when it may march on with the irresistible strides of a giant and may grow powerful enough to demand and dictate things with a reckless heroism, which the puny beginnings today can hardly conceive or dare to express.

I should also make it clear that in outlining this practical policy I am only expressing my personal views. They cannot bind the Hindu Maha Sabha unless they are sanctioned by its corporate resolutions.

(a) Our first and foremost aim in our political activities must always be to guard the integrity of Hindusthan in tact. Hindusthan to us does not only mean the so-called British India but comprises even those parts which are under the French and the Portuguese possession. Gomantak and Pondichery are as integral parts of our Mother Land as Maharashtra or Bengal. From the Indus to the Himalayas, from the Himalayas to Tibet, from Tibet to Burma and from Burma to the Southern and Western seas run the lines of the boundaries of our Land. The whole territory including Kashmere and Nepal, Gomantak, Pondichery and other French possessions constitutes our national and territorial unit and must be consolidated in a free and centralised state. It must ever remain undivided and indivisible. Any attempt to divide this Territorial and National unity of Hindusthan so as, for example, to break it up into Hindu and Moslem zones, must be opposed tooth and nail and chastised as an act of treason and treachery.

(b) Towards our neighbouring states of Burma and Tibet on the Eastern and North Eastern Frontiers our Policy will always be, so far as possible, of whole-hearted friendship and if they choose even of a political alliance. They are our co-religionists and our political interests too are not inherently antagonistic. Nay, we will only find, in general, our mutual political strength augmented if we continue to be political allies.

(c) But towards those Moslem states and tribes which border our North Western frontier our policy cannot but be a guarded one. Their tendency for centuries in the past had been fanatically enmical towards the Hindus and is likely to continue to be so far at least a century to come. The Hindu Sanghathanist party must always see that this Frontier is garrisoned with overwhelming Hindu troops and is never entrusted to Moslem ones. We will always be ready to establish friendly contact with those bordering states and shall give no cause for unnecessary but should keep our forces there always in a state of war and vigilant to resist any sudden aggressive eruption on the part of those Moslem tribes or any threatened invasion through the passes by any anti-Hindu alien army.

(d) To the Independent Hindu kingdom of Nepal all Hindudom feels itself most loyally attached and would ever strive to strain every nerve in defending its honour and integrity. It is the only part of our Mother Land which continues down to this day as a Dharma Kabhtra unsoiled by the humiliating shadow of an alien non-Hindu flag. The independence of the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal, the home of a heroic Hindu race, constitutes at once the pride and the centre of Hindu hope. Every atom of strength added to Nepal elevates and strengthens the prestige and the position of Hindudom all round. On the

other hand anything that weakens or humiliates Hindudom in any other part of Hindusthan must weaken the strength of Nepal in the long run. The danger of the Moslem upheaval on the North Western Frontier, for example, cannot but be a standing menace to the independence of the Hindu Kingdom in Nepal too. If Hindu history has not endowed us even with this much foresight then it must be said that all the lessons which the invasions of Gaznis and Ghoris were meant by destiny to teach us are lost on us.

Nevertheless, it will be foolish on our part to do anything to drag Nepal into the muddled and slogan ridden politics which disfigures the British Indian Territory. The politics of a subject race can be no guide to the exigencies of an Independent Kingdom situated as Nepal. I, therefore, feel no hesitation whatsoever in justifying the present policy of the Nepal Government to maintain friendly relations with the British Government and to continue an informal political alliance with the British with a view to guard against any other non-Hindu aggression on India. Consequently, it is also a very wise policy on the part of Nepal to supply as many Nepalese recruits to the Indian forces as it is possible to do in conformity with its own security and strength. The political complications in Europe and the Far East are almost sure to persuade the British Government too to depend more and more on Nepal's friendship and military help to secure Indian defence.

In this connection it must be emphasised that the British Government should also restore some of those territories on the borders of Nepal which the British had wrested from her in the past, back to the Maharaja. Such a step will cement the friendship between the two Nations as nothing else can do.

Nepal has doubtless a great future before her if but she takes time by the forelock and has the Prophetic vision which a rising Nation must necessarily possess. She must bring up her military strength to an up-to-date European efficiency and must be able to defend herself not only on land but against any aerial aggression too by equipping herself with a powerful aerial force. Her strength being the strength of an ally the British Government too is not likely under the present circumstances to hamper her in this attempt with any feeling of uneasiness but would rather wish her to hasten on this project. The influence which Nepal is likely to exercise on Indian politics in near future is better pointed out in the words Mr. Perseval Langdon.

Says Mr. Langdon, "It invests Nepal with an importance which it would be foolish to overlook. Englishmen through the high position which Nepal holds in the General Southern Asiatic balance and the great and growing importance that she will possess in the future in the solution of the problems which beset the present state of India, Nepal stands to-day on the threshold of a new light. Her future calls her in one direction and one only. In all the varied theatres of Indian politics there is nothing which surpasses in interest the ultimate destiny of Nepal. Inevitably she will become of greater and greater importance if we persist in our present policy of lessening British influence in India. It is not impossible that Nepal may even be called upon to control the destiny of India itself."

(c) The National Constitution of Hindusthan :—

The Hindu Sanghathanist Party aims to base the future Constitution of Hindusthan on the broad principle that all citizens should have equal rights and obligations irrespective of caste or creed, race or religion,—provided they avow and owe an exclusive and devoted allegiance to the Hindusthani State. The fundamental rights of liberty of speech, liberty of conscience, of worship, of association etc. will be enjoyed by all citizens alike. Whatever restriction will be imposed on them in the interest of the public peace and order or National emergency will not be based on any religious or racial considerations alone but on common National grounds.

No attitude can be more National even in the territorial sense than this and it is this attitude in general which is expressed in substances by the curt formula "one man one vote". This will make it clear that the conception of a Hindu Nation is in no way inconsistent with the development of a common Indian Nation, a united Hindusthani State in which all sects and sections, races and religions, castes and creeds, Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Anglo-Indians etc. could be harmoniously welded together into a political state on terms of perfect equality.

This attitude which the Hindu Maha Sabha takes up with regard to the National Hindusthani Constitution is in fact more definitely and exclusively National than either the League or even the Congress, which calls itself Indian National, has as yet dared to take up uncompromisingly and yet it is the Hindu

Maha Sabha and the conception of the Hindu Nation which is tabooed by the Congress and the League as most dangerously anti-National and uncompromisingly Communal ! The fact is that the National Congress itself is not only communal in its legitimate sense but perversely communal ; in as much as it recognises a majority and a minority, the Hindus and the Moslems, and on the top of it all forces the majority to forego its just share in the franchise in the public services, in cultural rights and offers them to a minority based on religion to buy its patriotism and attachment to the common National State. On the other hand by asking for the Moslems as a religious entity wanton advantages over and above what they are entitled on a National basis at the cost of the Hindus at the point of a dagger, a threat to secede and join hand with an alien power, the Moslem League takes up a position which is anti-National to the point of treachery. In demanding three votes for one Moslem the Moslem League is outrageously communal ; while in calling upon the Hindus to yield to this demand and accede to the proposal of one vote for three Hindus, the Congress is cowardly communal ! And yet it is precisely these two bodies, the Pseudo-National Congress and the confessedly anti-National League which have the temerity to accuse the Hindu Sanghatanist party as Communalistic and anti-National simply because they are not ready to betray their birth right for a mess of pottage—to play the second fiddle to the Moslems or care for a worthless certificate from the Congressites of being "Nationalists !"

(f) The rights of non-Hindu minorities :—

When once the Hindu Mahasabha not only accepts but maintains the principles of "one man one vote" and the Public Services to go by merit alone added to the fundamental rights and obligations to be shared by all citizens alike irrespective of any distinction of race or religion.....any further mention of minority rights is on principle not only unnecessary but self-contradictory, because it again introduces a consciousness of majority and minority on Communal basis. But as practical politics requires it and as the Hindu Sanghatanists want to relieve our non-Hindu countrymen of even a ghost of suspicion, we are prepared to emphasise that the legitimate rights of minorities with regard to their religion, culture, and language will be expressly guaranteed on one condition only that the equal rights of the majority also must not in any case be encroached upon or abrogated. Every minority may have separate schools to train up their children in their own tongue, their own religious institutions or cultural and can receive Government help also for these,—but always in proportion to the taxes they pay into the common exchequer. The same principle must of course hold good in case of the majority too.

Over and above this, in case the constitution is not based on joint electorates and on the unalloyed National principle of "one man vote" but is based on the communal basis, then those minorities who wish to have separate electorate or reserve seats will be allowed to have them,—but always in proportion to their population and provided that it does not deprive the majority also of an equal right in proportion to its population too.

I believe that our Christian, Parsee, the Jewish and other minorities,—except the Moslems, will be perfectly satisfied with the constitution based on these principles as broadly outlined above. Because the Christians, the Jews and most eminently the Parsees are too allied to us in culture and too patriotic, while the Anglo-Indians too sensible, to fail to see that no constitution if it has to keep the integrity, sovereignty and strength of the National State safely can go any further and that it is all that is really required to safeguard any genuine special interests of the minorities as distinguished from those of the majority. Only that minority will insist to have still more and yet more to the last pound of flesh which in fact cherishes secret designs to disintegrate the State, to create a state within a state or altogether to subvert the National State and hold all others under its subjection. Fortunately, no section of our countrymen belonging to the non-Moslem minorities mentioned above, harbours this treasonable design. It is only with regard to the Moslem Minority that this cannot be asserted with confidence ; and therefore, I shall deal separately with it later on.

In this connection a point of far-reaching importance and one which has a very serious bearing on the political and religious and cultural interests of the Christian, Jews and Parsee countrymen of ours in particular, must be mentioned in bold relief. The anti-National and aggressive designs on the part of the Moslem minority, constitutes a danger to non-Moslem Indians in India and not only to the

Hindus alone. It is too clear a point to require any further elucidation here. It is the anti-National attitude of the Moslem minority alone which is giving a handle to the British Government to obstruct further political and constitutional progress in Hindusthan. But in order to camouflage their own special responsibility for this guilt the Moslems always try to drag in other minorities also in support of their attitude and want the world to believe that all non-Hindu minorities are as determinedly uncompromising in the anti-National demands advanced by the Moslem League. The League always wants to pose as the champion of all non-Hindu minorities. But the fact is that the relations of Christians, Jews and above all our Parsee brethren have been for centuries most cordial with us Hindus and these non-Moslem minorities have never advanced any anti-National or unreasonable claims or had never indulged in political hooliganism or fanatical riots as a silly means to impress their political importance. My earnest suggestion therefore to our Christians, Jews, Parsees and such other non-Moslem minorities would be that they should openly and definitely disown the League designs, protest against being bracketed with the Moslems under the misleading and mischievous common term "minorities", call upon the Moslem League not to speak in general on their behalf and above all should definitely declare through their respective political organizations that they are perfectly willing and contented to form a common National front with the Hindus under the conditions referred to above. If, but the Christians, the Jews, the Parsees and all non-Moslem minorities and the Hindus present a common understanding and a common front at any would be Round Table Conference or Constituent Assembly the Moslems will find themselves singularly isolated and will be forced to cease to speak in the name of "the minority problem" and will have to shoulder by themselves the responsibility of their anti-National and fanatical claims. These supercilious pretensions of Moslems of being a chosen minority, the bluff claiming political importance and historical traditions investing with an incomparable superiority amongst the Indian people in general, constitutes a challenge and an insult to our Christians, Jewish, Parsees and other countrymen too.

(g) The Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress :—I have no space here nor the inclination to frame a charge-sheet against the Congress, enumerating the grievous errors it has been committing under the dictatorship of Gandhiji and the leaders of his persuasion ever since the Khilafat agitation; setting at naught even the protests of such eminent Hindu Patriots as Lokamanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shradhdhanand and others, which errors have weakened and humiliated Hindudom at every step. I have no inclination to do so or condemn them even in such harsh terms as the gravity of the errors in fact demand. Because I know that some of them have rendered eminent services to our Motherland and many of them meant well. Although the Congress as a body has been ungrateful to a degree in failing to appreciate the patriotic sacrifice and service the Hindu Mahasabhas have rendered equally with and in cases even far more intensely than the Congressites in the fight for the Freedom of Hindusthan, yet let every Hindu Bengathanist be just and generous in brotherly appreciation of the patriotic motives of those of the Congressites who had been highly selfless and sacrificing. It is not their motive but their judgment and in a couple of cases a monomaniac incompetence which were responsible for the erroneous policy they persisted in, which has done incalculable harm to the Hindu cause and which if not checkmated is likely to jeopardise not only the legitimate interests of Hindudom far more dangerously than in the past but even the vital interests of the "Indian Nation" too as the Congress itself understands it and loves so well.

It is not, therefore, to rake up fruitlessly the sad memories of the most grievous error which the Congressites committed in their identification with the Khilafat agitation but to warn against the imminent dangers of a similar type that I must refer to a few facts regarding the attitude of the Gandhist politicians in that ill-fated movement. In spite of the warnings of the Great Tilak Gandhiji committed the Congress to the purely communal, religious and extra territorial Khilafat agitation to placate the Moslems and himself went to the length of insisting on the point that the question of Swaraj itself should be subordinated to the Khilafat issue :—nay, he said it was the religious duty of the Hindus to help the Khalifa! And yet the same Congress leaders forbade the Congress even to touch the Nizam Civil Resistance movement as a thing unclean and denounced it as communal because it demanded the religious and cultural rights of Hindus! Not only that but true to their words these Congressite Hindu leaders did not subordinate Swaraj to the Khilafat question only in its signature aspect



but were hands in glove with the Moslem leaders who instigated Amir Amanullah Khan to invade India as he actually did. We have the word of Swami Bhadrachandralal for it. The Swamiji publicly wrote to that effect in protest in his "Liberator" and produced some documentary evidence and a draft telegram in Gandhiji's handwriting to the Amir which Maulana Mahomad Ali had shown to Swamiji. In his own "Young India" Gandhiji admitted that the Afghans if successful were sure to establish their Kingdom in India; (see Young India 1-6-21)—and yet these Congressite Hindu leaders did not dissociate themselves from the Moslem leaders in their open and secret activities to egg on the Afghan Invasion, but on the contrary promised support to this treacherous move. Gandhiji writes in his "Young India" (4-5-21), "I would in a sense certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan if he waged war against the British Government—by openly telling my countrymen that it would be a crime to help the Government etc." If you like to see the length these gentlemen had gone in this affair you may read a useful tract recently published by Mr. Karandikar of Poona which is full of original extracts from the speeches and writings of the then Congress Leaders and Gandhiji's Young India. What is most surprising to note is the fact that these Hindu Leaders outbid even the Ali Brothers, the 'National' Maulana Asad and other Moslem leaders in maintaining that if the Amir succeeded in capturing Delhi, we would have won Swaraj!—for, they definitely stated that the rule of the Afghans was in itself a Swaraj,—we Hindu Moslems are one,—an indivisible Nation." I vividly remember conversations I had with these Hindu leaders of Gandhist persuasion when they used to meet me then in prison. How expectantly they waited for the invading armies of the Amir to capture Lahore! Well, after all, the Khilafat was guillotined by the Turks themselves and the Amir Amanullah instead of being an Emperor at Delhi was dethroned by a Bachha Saku in Kabul itself; and all that India reaped from the Khilafat agitation was the intensified Pan-Islamic fanaticism roused by that movement amongst the Indian Moslems all over India, aided and abetted by the Hindus themselves who paid dearly for this their folly there and then in Malabar, Kohat, Punjab, Bengal—and will have yet to pay unless they learn to react.

While the Khilafat was on his brain, in a reply he gave to the correspondent of the 'Daily Express', London, Gandhiji disclosed his plan of converting the Afghans from fanatical turbulence into a peaceful citizenship thus, "I would introduce the spinning wheel amongst the Afghan tribes also and then that will prevent them from attacking Indian territory. I feel the tribesmen are in their own way God-fearing people."

Yes, "in their own way": That is the trouble. For, we can clearly discern their own way of God-fearingness in the ghastly light of Hindu inhabitations set on fire throughout the frontier line from Sindh to Kashmir, only Hindus looted, only Hindus killed, only Hindu women and men kidnapped! Is not the Fakir of Ipi also a God-fearing man in his own way? And the spinning wheel to persuade them from attacking India! How many centuries after, Sir? And what are we Hindus to do in the meanwhile? To garrison the frontiers with hosts of Hindu damsels with the charm of the spinning wheel in their hands—as Gandhiji has suggested quite seriously at one of the sittings of the Round Table Conference?

Well, gentlemen, I am not referring to these few details in any light mood. I want you to realise the mentality and the ideology of these Hindu leaders who still happen to be at the helm of the Congress. Neither Gandhiji or Pandit Nehru, nay, not even Subhas Babu or Mr. Roy who, although they do not contribute in any way to some of the above vagaries of the Gandhist school are still votaries—I call it victims—of the school of thought which says in so many words, "Give to the Moslems so much that they could not wish to ask for anything more." They may sincerely believe that to be the crux of Nationalism and wisdom. But do you, who do not wish to see Hindudom humiliated and browbeaten into servility, believe it to be so? If not, are you going to authorise these very gentlemen by electing and returning them as representatives who can speak in the name of the Hindus once again at any Round Table Conference to come, to enter into any new pact with the Moslems on behalf of the Hindus, or entrust the destiny of the North Western Frontiers into the hands of the Khan brothers who are the Congress Placemen and Gandhiji's certified Lieutenants there—as once the Ali brothers were? I call upon those thousands of Hindus also who have not ceased to be Hindus but who still follow the Congress with a blind habitual trust to pronounce as early as possible on these questions.

After the Khilafat came the Blank cheques; then the Communal Award or Decision,—‘lapses of memory’, make the Congress leaders call it sometimes this way some times that, but which always remains definitely unrejected and in fact accepted and worked out by them. Then rushed in the flood of circulars issued by Congress Ministers in all provinces: Mr. Pant, for example, assuring the Moslems amongst other things. I quote his words, “At Barabanki the Congress Government stopped Hindus from doing *Araat* in their own temples and blowing conch-shells during the whole period of Moharum and at several places during the Holi, the Hindus were prevented from sprinkling colour-water even on Hindus amongst themselves. At Jaunpur the District Magistrate was attacked by Moslems but the accused were released on the recommendation of the Secretary of the Moslem League. The Congress Government has given representation to the Moslems out of all proportion to their numerical strength which came up to only 14 p.c. But out of four Collectors appointed by the Congress Government three were Moslems and out of 13 Deputy Collectors eight were Moslems”. So on and so on. Every Hindu should read this whole circular issued by the U. P. Congress Government. It is a masterpiece of self-condemnation. It was secretly circulated only amongst the Moslems but the Hindu Sabhais, those cursed, “communalist” traitors got hold of some copies of this our ‘National’ confession and broadcasted its reprints. Space forbids me from quoting from other circulars issued by Provincial Congress Governments in C. P., Madras, etc. all fashioned after the same pattern pleading in substance before the Tribunal of the Muslim League: “Sir, we have deprived the Hindus everywhere of what is due to them and given Moslems overwhelmingly more than was due”, oppressed the Hindus as best as we could wherever the Moslems were pleased to demand it: So let the League be pleased therefore, Sir, to certify that the Congress Ministries were truly impartial and perfectly National !!!”.

And the Moslem League has certified at last by observing the Day of Deliverance from the Congress Tyranny under which the Moslems groaned for the past two long long enduring years. In a way it was a tyranny. for in all those provinces were the Moslems only 7 to 12 p.c. in numerical strength but the Congress gave them posts in the stinky proportion of 40 p.c. only in the Educational, Police and other Administrative departments where they ought to have got cent per cent. in consideration of their historical importance, for their being the direct communal descendants of the Moghal Emperors! Has not even Lord Zetland referred to warlike qualities of the Moslems only this month, and reminded the Congressite Hindus that the Moslem Emperors ruled over India for a time, implying thereby that the Moslems were therefore some superior beings to the Hindus! It was fortunate that His Lordship was never sent in his early youth to any primary Maratha school. Otherwise he would have been deprived of the advantage of that argument by a little more knowledge of the fate of that Moslem Empire, how the avenging hosts of Hindus had beaten to a chip the forces of these “Warlike Moslems” in a hundred battle fields, smashed to pieces this self-same Moghul Empire, rearing up an Independent Hindu Empire on the ashes of Moslem Pride and Power and held the Moghul Emperors as prisoners and pensioners in their hands.

But it is no use now on the part of our Congress friends to fulminate against this latest move of the Moslem League. The Deliverance Day of to-day is but the inevitable logical consequence of the Khilafat Day so gaily observed by the Congress yesterday. It is you who have initiated the Moslems into the belief that the more they demand the more you yield, the more they frown the more you placate, the more they pocket the more you offer, the more thankless they grow the more afflicted you are with craving for their thanks. Did you not offer them blank cheques? Why then get startled, now that they begin to fill them up with whatever ransom they are pleased to demand! Dr. Munje, Bhai Paramanand and other leaders of the Hindu Maha Sabha protested against the Khilafat Policy, against your blank Cheques, against your meaningless “neither accept nor reject” vagaries, —but you then denounced them all as wicked Communalists, looked down even upon Shivaji and Pratap as misguided Patriots, because they conquered by the Sword and you gave yourself out as new Messiahs who have come to conquer by love alone, as world guides in direct communications with the inner voice. And now how pitiable it is to find you so sorely afflicted for want of guidance for yourselves to find out a way to appease and win over by love alone a single individual, the President of the League, that you should stand imploring at the gates of all the British Governors and the Viceroy to lend you a helping hand.

Then again, whenever it happened that some British Authorities or leaders referred to the policy of the Hindu Maha Sabha on a point here or there with a tinge of appreciation, our Congress Nationalists used to exclaim in righteous indignation, "There! what more proof is required to reprove the anti-National guilt of these Hindu Maha Sabhaite Communalists than the fact that the British people should appreciate their policy on this or that point." And now there is a regular scramble amongst these Nationalist Congress leaders to secure and flourish in the face of the world certificates of appreciation from the British Governors and the Viceroy to prove that the Congress Ministries were after all not so bad and had served under the British Government to its satisfaction. Moreover, it is also very funny to observe that those very Congress leaders, who blamed the Hindu Sanghathanists whenever they claimed a legitimate protection from the British Government against the Moslem outrages on the Frontier or in Malabar or in Bengal, should now be vying with each other in calling upon Governors and the Viceroy to arbitrate as the best judges and save the Congress prestige by declaring it not guilty in the very serious case framed against them by the Moslem League. Is it not now anti-National to appeal to the British—"the third party"—"the outsiders" to step in to settle our internal differences which we may have with our Moslem countrymen?

It is also instructive and therefore necessary to point out here that this theory of "the third party" also constituted a Congress superstition which was responsible for so many of its errors. They always used to fancy that the Moslems left to themselves would never indulge in any anti-National, ulterior, anti-Hindu designs. The Moslems,—including Messrs. Jinnah, Hugs and Hayat Khans,—were very simple-minded folks incapable of any political subterfuges and as devotees of Islamic peace and goodwill had no aggressive political aims of their own against the Hindus. Nay, even the Frontier tribes, the "brave brother Moplas", the Moslem populations in Bengal or Sindh who indulge in such horrible outrages against Hindus have not taste for it all nursed within themselves—but were almost compelled to rise and revolt against the Hindus by "the Third Party" the Britishers. When the British did not step in, we Hindus and Moslems lived together in perfect amity and brotherly concord and Hindu Moslem riots was a thing simply unheard of".

Thousands of Congressite Hindus are observed to have been duped into this silliest of political superstitions. As if Mahamad Kasim, Gazania, Ghoris, Allaeddins, Aurangjebs were all instigated by the British, by this Third Party, to invade and lay waste Hindu India with a mad fanatical fury. As if the history of the last ten centuries of perpetual war between the Hindus and Moslems was an interpolation and a myth. As if the Alis or Mr. Jinnah or Sir Sikandar were mere school children to be spoiled with the offer of sugar pills by the British vagabonds in the class and persuaded to throw stones at the house of their neighbours. They say, "before the British came, Hindu Moslem riots, were a thing unheard of". Yes, but because instead of riots Hindu Moslem war was the order of the day.

But supposing for a while what the Gandhists maintain that it is this third party, the British, who are solely responsible for hypnotising Moslems into anti-Hindu and anti-National tendencies, how is it that Gandhiji and his Congressite Lieutenants are invoking the very "third party"—the British Governors and the Viceroy to act as arbitrators, to judge whether the Congress was really guilty of the accusations levelled by the Moslem League against it? Is the leading abettor the best person to arbitrate? To request him whom you accuse as the leading instigator to investigate into the crime! If the Congress superstition was true then the British are sure to adjudge the Award in a way to intensify the ill-will and distrust between the Congressite and the League so as to undermine yet further any chances of Hindu Moslem understanding and concord. So then either your third party theory was wrong and superstitious or you have obviously bungled, in approaching the very mischief making third party to arbitrate.

The simple fact which the Congressite Hindus would do well to take a note of even now and which would spare them from a series of such inconsistent and bungling steps is that the Moslem religion, theocratic traditions and history all imbue them with inherent ambition of Islamic political Sovereignty. The British policy at times when it suits British interest does of course act as a match—but the explosive magazine is genuinely Moslem. It could be held in check but not to him who overpays its existence and dupes himself into the belief that the match itself was the magazine. If not the British make, any other match any

serve the same purpose. Nay, spontaneous combustion is also its peculiar characteristic. Secondly, the Moslems are practical politicians to a fault. So they, in general, yield to and ally instinctively with the stronger, even if be their worse opponent,—and continue to bully the weaker. Has not England reduced them to a subject race in India and elsewhere? But to-day England is strong of the two. So they will fawn on England and continue to aggrandise against the Hindus. If to-morrow the Hindus grow strongest they will be yielding to Hindus too and behave as brothers as they did in Maharashtra and Panjab in the days of the Peshwar or Ranjit Singh. That is why Hindu-Moslem riots were a thing unheard of in days gone by "to quote the Congressite Slogan."

In all sincerity I request my Congressite brothers that instead of fulminating against the move of the League or what is more likely especially in the case of the Gandhist group instead of being yet more browbeaten, the best way would be to take it as an effective eye-opener and arrest their steps once for all on the dangerous path they were treading. They should simply refuse to have any further dealing with the Moslems as Moslems. Let the Indian National Congress rectify that fundamental mistake and be once more the real Indian National Congress as it claims to be. Let it be absolutely consistent with its own ideal of a territorial Nationalism and begin with a clean slate. Let it proclaim once for all that it stands by these principles alone;

Firstly, it recognizes no Moslem as a Moslem or Christian as a Christian or Hindu as a Hindu; but looks upon them all and deal with them all as Indians only; and therefore, will have nothing to do with any special communal, religious or racial interests as apart from the fundamental interests guaranteed to all citizens alike.

Secondly, it does not acknowledge any other constitutional principle with regard to electorates than the rule "one man one vote" and public services to go by merit alone. Only one alternative it may condescend to subscribe in view of the peculiar situation in India to the effect that if Communal representation is to be resorted to at all then it must strictly be in relation to the commercial strength of the constituents and in the public services too that relation may be observed, but only in so far as it is consistent with merit.

Thirdly and above all, so long as such a National and just constitution could not be had, let the Congress resist the temptation of participating in any election whatsoever under a constitution which is deliberately meant to divide the integrity of the Indian people and is not only used on Communal divisions but is most unjustly harmful to the majority community and constitutes a standing instigation to the Moslem minority to act against the Nation as a whole as the present constitution aims to do. So long as there are separate electorates for the Moslems and the general which in fact means the Hindu one, then let the Moslem League and the Hindu Mahasabha participate in the elections and let the Congress stand supremely aloof as a truly Indian National body which can never condescend to identify itself with any particular communal electorate.

If but the Congress takes courage in both hands, rectifies its past anti-Hindu and anti-National attitude and takes up the stand I have suggested above, the prestige of the Congress as a truly National organisation will immediately be enhanced. In that case it will regain in general the whole-hearted confidence of the Hindu Mahasabha at any rate.

But it can on no account continue to play the double-faced game of getting elected on behalf of the Hindu Electorate as Hindus and betray the legitimate interest of the Hindus as Nationalists. It can no longer hunt with the hound and run with the hare. Otherwise the Moslems are bound to continue and rightly so to look upon it as a Hindu body while the Hindus will look upon it and rightly too as a pseudo-Nationalistic nuisance dangerous to the Hindu cause as well as the Indian National as a whole.

May I hope that the Congress will open its eyes? If it does even now it is not yet too late! As my friend Mr. Ketkar proposes in "Maratha" of Poona, let the Congress observe a Day of Rectification to counteract the League's Day of Deliverance, proclaim the truly National orientation suggested above and write to the League the last word closing all further correspondence. "Sir, if you come, with you; if you do not without you; and if you oppose inside of you—we shall continue the good fight to free our Hindusthan as best as we can."

And in case our Moslem friends want to have a Royal Commission to define their rights let the Congress tell them uncompromisingly "If you want to have a

resort to any independent arbitration, well, then, the highest tribunal of that can be but the League of Nations which has already framed a Public Law with regard to the rights of minorities all over the world. The case of Indian minorities also should be referred to the League." In fact, had the Congress taken up this stand as uncompromisingly as possible and as Dr. Munje had already suggested, then at the Round Table Conference things could never have drifted in this wild way.

(b) The Hindu Maha Sabha will have to frame a detailed programme of its Economical policy in near future when it issues its electoral manifesto. All that I can do now is to suggest a few broad principles, as space forbids dilution. Firstly, it must be remembered that man is not altogether an economical being. It has been well said by Christ that man does not live by bread alone. As it is spiritually true it is also true in the Racial, Cultural, National and several others aspects that go to constitute the human nature. Therefore, the attempt to interpret all human history and human activities in economical terms alone, is altogether one sided and amounts to maintaining that man has no other urge in him to live but hunger.

Besides hunger, the problem of bread, man has other appetites as fundamental as that sensual, intellectual, sentimental, some natural, some acquired, some personal, some social, and his being is a complex one; so also is his history. Man has stomach but the stomach is not man. Therefore, the solution that is sometimes suggested to the effect that that economical community of interest provides the only and the best solvent of all religious, racial, national and other antipathies that divide mankind in the world is as superficial as simple. The fact that in Europe the very races and nations wherein the prophets of this school arose and preached and where giant efforts were made to revolutionise all human institutions and recast them into this economical mould alone, religious, racial and national differences have been assuming formidable proportions and have been persisting to assert themselves in Germany, Italy, France, Poland, England, Spain etc. in spite of centuries of the most intense propaganda to insist on economical community of interest, is enough to prove that you cannot altogether eliminate all religious or racial or national factors at a stroke, at a thought. Those who advance the easy argument: 'If but you persuade all to unite on the economical plane and to forget every other superstitious differences as the racial, cultural, etc.' forget themselves that the very "but" in their argument rebuts the practical utility at any rate, apart from its theoretical soundness. Consequently, the Hindu Sanghathanists must in no case delude themselves with the belief that the economical programme alone will ever suffice to solve all cultural, racial and national dangers that threaten them throughout India.

Secondly, they should remember that economical questions too are inextricably bound up under the circumstances obtaining in India with religious and racial complications. There are thousands of examples which the workers in the Hindu Sanghathanist field know through experience that if a Hindu takes to a particular trade which happens to be the monopoly of the Moslems he is persecuted. A new Hindu Pindari or Tangewala is threatened at several places with death. Witness the fact that Moslem dacoits who attack cities and villages on the Frontiers and loot them proclaim at drum beats "we will only loot Hindus, no Moslem shopkeepers or money-lenders will we touch." Hundreds of hundreds of cases of this type could be cited. Now, how are you to afford immediate relief to these Hindus unless by organizing them as Hindus? Moslem police as Moslems, defend them not. It is clearly a religious, racial and cultural plague and only the patent economical pills can afford no cure. To preach to these millions of fanatics, for example, the rioters in Sukkur District that their economical interests are at one with the Hindus and thus convert them into human brotherhood! Well, let them try it who like it—but how many centuries will it take? and what are the Hindus to do in the meanwhile? It is just to match the mopomaniac remedy of Gandhiji—the spinning wheel, by which he wants to convert the world into Ahimsa and make it resort to eternal disarmament! Yet, let the wise mouse himself be asked to put into practice his excellent suggestion to bell the cat and let all others in the meanwhile take to other practical contrivances and steps to save themselves?

Consequently, leaving aside the doctrinaire solution of an *Indian* economical front or the airy hopes that if but we insist on the economical community of interest of all alike and unite all Indians at any rate, on the economical plane alone, all religious, racial, national and cultural animosities will vanish like a mist, we Hindu Sanghathanists should as practical politicians restrict our immediate economical programmes to the economical advance of the Hindu Nation alone.

Taking into consideration the special circumstances obtaining in India and the stage of social progress, the only school of economics which will suit our requirements in immediate future is the school of Nationalistic Economy. To express all the leading part and of our economical policy in a suitable formula, I should like to style it, as the policy of "National co-ordination of class interests". This is the economical flank of the Hindu Sangathanist platform :

(a) We shall first of all welcome the machine. This is a Machine age. The handicrafts will of course have their due place and encouragement. But National production will be on the biggest possible machine scale :

(b) the peasantry and the working class form literally the chief source of National wealth, health and strength as well ; for a stalwart army also has for its recruit depot to depend chiefly on these very classes which supply the Nation with the first two requisites. Therefore every effort will be made to revigourate them and the villages which are their cradle. Peasants and labourers must be enabled to have their share in the distribution of wealth to such an extent as to enable them not only with a bare margin of existence but the average scale of a comfortable life. Nevertheless it must be remembered that they too being a part and parcel of the Nation as a whole must share obligations and responsibilities and therefore can only receive their share in such a way as is consistent with the general development and security of the National Industry, manufacture and wealth in general ;

(c) as the National capital is under the present circumstances mainly individual and indispensable for the development of National Industry and Manufacture, it also will receive due encouragement and recompense :

(d) but the interests of both the capital and labour will be sub-ordinated to the requirement of the Nation as a whole ;

(e) if an industry is flourishing, the profits will be shared in a large portion by the labourers. But on the contrary if it is a losing concern, not only the Capitalist but to a certain extent even the Labourer will have to be satisfied with diminishing returns so that the National Industry as such may not altogether be undermined by the overbearing attitude of the selfish class interests of either the capitalists or labourites. In short the claims of the capital and labour will be so co-ordinated from time to time as to enable the Nation as a whole to develop its National Industry and manufacture and make itself self-sufficient ;

(f) in cases some of the key industries or manufactures and such other items may be altogether nationalised if the National Government can afford to do so and can conduct them more efficiently than private enterprise can do ;

(g) the same principle applies to cultivation of Land. We should so co-ordinate the interest of the Landlord and the peasant that the National agricultural production may on the whole be developed and does not suffer owing to any selfish tussle between the class interests of the Landowner or the tenants or the tiller ;

(h) in some cases the Government may take over the land and introduce state cultivation if it can serve to train up the peasant class as a whole with use of big machines and agriculture on a large and scientific scale ;

(i) all strikes or lockouts which are obviously meant or inevitably tend to undermine and cripple National Industry or production in general or are calculated to weaken the economic strength of the Nation as a whole must be referred to state arbitration and get settled or in serious cases quelled ;

(j) private property must in general be held inviolate ;

(k) and in no case there should be on the part of the State any expropriation of such property without reasonable recompense ;

(l) every step must be taken by the state to protect National Industries against foreign competition.

I have hurriedly lined out the above items to serve as illustrations only. The National economical strength must grow and the Nation must be made economically self-sufficient ; these two form the pivot of the Policy.

A special feature of no less importance of this Hindu Sangathanist economics must of course be to safeguard the economical interests of the Hindus wherever and whenever they may be threatened by the economical aggression of the non-Hindus as happens to day, of a set policy in the Nizam State, in Punjab, in Bhopal, in Assam and in several other parts of India. Hindu Sabhas in all localities should make it a point to see that the Hindu peasants, the Hindu traders, the Hindu labourers do not suffer at the hand of non-Hindu Aggression while the conflicting class interests amongst the Hindus themselves should be solved in the light of the above general principle.

The European War:—The two explicit resolutions passed by the Working Committee regarding our Policy towards the War in Europe leave nothing more to be said on that subject, as no new event has happened to demand a change. I exhort the British Government once more that a definite and immediate declaration of granting the Dominion Status as contemplated in the Westminster Statute to India, at the end of the War at the latest is the only means to secure a whole-hearted sympathy of the Hindu people with England in this present struggle and to ensure the willingness even of an Independent India in future to continue a co-partnership in the commonwealth on equal terms any delay in granting the Dominion Status as an immediate step to enable India to tread on the path of evolutionary progress towards her ultimate political destiny would prove dangerous even to the solidarity of the British Commonwealth. The rise and rapid advance of Japan in the East, of Russia, Italy and Germany in the West are events portentous and a contented and self-governing India cannot but be a mighty factor in strengthening the British position in facing any anti-British combination. But no amount of political sophistry can disarm Indian discontent and make her tolerate the humiliation of continuing as a British dependency. Do you expect any longer to dupe her into the belief that it is only the want of an understanding between the Indian majority and minority, the Hindus and Muslims with regard to such details as the percentage in representation etc. that justifies England in delaying the grant of Dominion Status forthwith? The British statesmen have recently stated that their conscience forbids to thrust an understanding on the minority, the Moslems, in India, against their will and would not move an inch till the Hindus and Moslems have produced a willing compromise and a common demand for a progressive constitution. It was really a news to learn that English Statesmen have grown so god-fearing and Democratical almost overnight as not to be willing to thrust on any people anything against their own will! But may it be asked that when you thrust your unmitigated political autocracy on India, was there any plebiscite taken to ascertain Indian opinion? Or did you take a plebiscite or receive a united request from the minority and the majority when only a couple of months ago you scrapped up the provincial autonomy at a stroke and invested Governors with powers to conduct the Government at their own discretion and in their own judgment? And if you could thrust undiluted autocracy, a vassalage on India and hold her as a dependency, can you not thrust a Dominion Status on her in spite of the will of a Minority and especially so when the majority has unanimously demanded it? You can thrust curses—can you not thrust blessings? The sooner the British people cease to have a resort to these transparent political subterfuges and to utilise the Moslem minority to camouflage their own unwillingness to grant Hindustan her birth right, her Swarajya, while she is still treading on an evolutionary path of political progress the better for England, the better for India. If the evolutionary path is thus altogether closed to the Hindus in particular by empowering the Moslems with a definite veto on all equitable progress a deadlock may ensue, but only for a while. Because nature hates vacuum, and if evolutionary progress is denied the gathering forces of Time Spirit cannot but take the other and more dangerous turn.

Unless indeed something unexpected and a far more imminent and urgent duty faces us in the meanwhile, I call upon all Hindu Sabhas whether local, provincial or central to concentrate their efforts on the following three-fold constructive programme in the main.

We have numberless tasks before us, all useful, all pressing, in their own way. But it is always better to begin with the beginning. Instead of getting lost in details or trying to do all at once and ending in leaving everything undone or illdone or bungled, carried away by anything and everything that comes in the way, it is always wiser to choose relatively what is most fundamental, most effective and at the same time within the reach of our present resources and ability and hit upon a plan to intensify our efforts on those items only in the main.

We should also remember that unless we gather strength we cannot and should not always be after precipitating struggles only for the sake of demonstration and excitement at the risk of courting an inevitable failure, when it is unneeded for. Navigators abide by the tide. Even lions lie in wait. Great expedients are built in silent and hidden quarters of the ports before they are called out in action and men with their multi-throated roar and fire routs their opponents.

I have not selected the following items at random. All the above factors are taken into consideration in their selection. These three items are the most fundamental, the most urgent, and yet quite within the reach of almost every Hindu.

Sangathanist who means to do the really needful at the hour which, though it may not be quite exciting to begin with, is yet quite sure to enable the forces of Hindudom to face a righteous fight in defence of its honour and freedom when the hour is struck. Those who can undertake other items of the Sangathan work along with these may of course do so. But our first and foremost attention must be concentrated on these three items for the next two years to begin with. Whatever we will be able to accomplish in this direction within these two years will put us in a position of vantage to solve other questions far more effectively than it can be done if we take them up now. Therefore.—

Intensify your efforts on conducting a whirlwind campaign at every village and town and city to,—

- (1) Remove Untouchability.
- (2) Compel all Universities, colleges and schools to make military training compulsory to students and secure entry into the Naval, Aerial and Military forces and institutions for your youths in any and every way.
- (3) Prepare the Hindu-Electorate to the utmost measure possible to vote only for those Hindu Sangathanists who openly pledge to safeguard Hindu interests, and not to vote for the Congress Candidates, who can never serve Hindu interest with full freedom and boldness even if they wish or promise to do so, so long as they are bound by the Congress discipline and tied to the Congress ticket.

The first of these items will enable you to consolidate at least a couple of crores of your own brethren who are religiously, culturally, nationally and in every other way as much a part and parcel of Hindudom as any of us can claim to be. Every local Hindu Sabha must see to it in its own locality that these our so called untouchable brethren are immediately elevated to the level of the so-called touchables by securing to them all fundamental rights which every citizen, even non-Hindu, are entitled to exercise in public life. We should persuade our touchable brothers, in cases wherever untouchable brothers are oppressed in any way on the only ground of untouchability based on birth alone, to fight their cause out if need be by resorting to law Court. Of course we should on no account molest or disrespect the sentiments of our Sanatani brothers so far as their personal freedom is concerned. But in public schools, conveyances, posts, services and in every aspect of public life no Hindu should be permitted to deprive other Hindus of their public rights on ground of caste or untouchability alone. Whatever social equality we Hindus allow to Moslems and other non-Hindus must as of a right belong to our Hindu brothers of whatever caste they be. To act otherwise is in reality an insult to our common Hinduness. It must be plainly mentioned here that even those who are at present bracketed as untouchables are themselves guilty of this sin just like those who are bracketed as touchable Hindus. For, every untouchable caste treats some other caste supposed to be inferior to it as untouchable as ruthlessly as it is treated itself by others. The sin is common to all of us and therefore, let us all join hands together and be determined to remove this curse with a supreme effort. In the meanwhile our Sanatani brothers may rest assured that barring the fundamental rights which every citizen is entitled to in public life, the Hindu Mahasabha will always refrain from having any recourse to law to thrust any religious reform on any sect within the Hindu fold even in the case of untouchability. But those Hindu Sangathanists, who are convinced of the incalculable harm untouchability has done and is doing, should also be free to act up according to their own conscience in their own dealings. The lines on which I call upon the Hindu Sangathanists to carry on an intense campaign of removing untouchability would be made clear from time to time as the work proceeds. I may mention here even at the risk of a personal reference that those who can should make it a point to read the report of the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha under my lead in conducting such an intense campaign against untouchability which was attended with notable success. It will also make it clear that the approach of the Hindu Sabha to the question of the removal of untouchability differs at the root from the approach of the Gandhist attempt to remove it. Therefore, although we may co-operate yet we should not identify our movement with the Gandhist movement.

In the next two years' time we Hindu Sabhas must do more in removing untouchability than two hundred years could do in the past.

So far as the second item is concerned the plans will be outlined in the All-India Committee and the sittings of the Working Committee from time to time.



The third item constitutes, of course, the very key-stone of the whole programme. Unless and until the Hindu electorate does not return only the Hindu Sangathanists to the Legislatures and local bodies but allows the Congress the right to represent the Hindu electorates in the eyes of the Government, the Hindus must continue to remain as political orphans in Hindusthan, in their own country. The Hindus may fight and win political rights as they have done to a great extent in the past. But so long as they have not cured themselves of this suicidal folly of resigning those rights in the hands of the Congress at the polls, they can never expect to strengthen the legitimate position of Hindudom in India. But on the contrary will find themselves as non-entities and the Moslems alone more profited by those very rights which the Hindus have won and consequently, in a position to suppress the Hindus with all the greater impact.

Remember also that a new Round Table Conference or a sort of a Constituent Assembly may be called in near future. So long as the Hindus return as their representatives the Congressists alone, the Government is bound and justified to look upon the Congress protests against it. And they will not recognize the Congress as representing the Moslems or the nation as a whole even if the Congress claims that position; because the Moslems refuse to return any Moslem on the Congress ticket as a rule. Even Dr. Kitchlew was defeated at the moslem polls because he stood on the Congress ticket. Under such circumstances, there is a grave and a sure danger of a further surrender of Hindu rights to Moslem demands which are already claiming equality of status even in the Hindu provinces. There will be no use of protest from the Hindu Sangathanist Party or of the secret blockings or fulminations of those Hindus in the Congress camp itself who personally hate this attitude on the part of the Congress as an organization; for, there will be no party with credentials from the Hindu electorate to represent them, who can advocate at the Conference the legitimate Hindu rights as freely and boldly and uncompromisingly as the Moslem League representatives can do theirs.

But if the Hindu electorate does ever come to its senses, refuses to return the Congressite candidates and returns only the Hindu Sangathanists in majority, the Hindus can have Hindu Sangathanist Government in at least seven provinces as the Moslems have in the Punjab, Bengal, etc., and the Hindus can capture enough political power so as to be in a position to remove at least 75 per cent of the grievances under which they are groaning now even in provinces like U. P. where they form the majority and the Congress ruled. The Provincial police and the public service will be under the command of Hindu Sangathanist Governments and will not dare to trample on or neglect Hindu rights. Nay, the Moslems of themselves, will neither dare to encroach upon Hindu rights nor put forward such intolerable anti-Hindu or antinational demands. As we have no grudge against the Moslem minority in so far as their legitimate rights are concerned and as the Hindu Sangathanists are ever willing to live in an honourable friendship and amity with their Moslem countrymen in Hindusthan, the Moslem minority too will have every protection in the exercise of its legitimate rights.

Therefore, all our efforts must be intensely concentrated during the next two or three years in persuading the Hindu electorate to vote for the Hindu Sangathanists alone and not to vote for the Congressites in any further elections. This will require a daily press devoted to the Hindu Sangathanist cause and a Central Fund. Above all we shall have to form a Hindu Party—including Sanatanists, Arya Samajists and all such other Hindu bodies, sects and sections, who have not as yet any formal connection with the Hindu Mahasabha as an organisation but are as devoted Hindu Sangathanists as the Hindu Sabhais themselves. The ways and means of effecting it all is a matter of detail and ought to be attended to by the local, provincial and the Central Hindu Mahasabha organisations and above all by all Hindu Sangathanists whether they be formal members of the Hindu Sabha or not.

But if in spite of our efforts the Hindu Electorate persists in its suicidal folly and votes for the Congress and we do not secure a majority at the polls, never mind. Our efforts are sure to succeed in securing a minority, as we already find in Maharashtra and some other places that Hindu Sangathanist candidates are not only elected in some hotly contested elections against the Congress but in cases have topped the polls. And even the presence of a minority of devoted Hindu Sangathanists in legislatures and local bodies acts as an effective check on the waywardness of the minority, gives a tongue unto Hindu grievances and paves a way to further progress and power.

But if we are completely outvoted at the elections and do not secure a single seat, never mind still. We shall acknowledge the defeat and share the blame.

in general. But we can proudly claim for ourselves individually that we did not betray our conscience in spite of overwhelming odds. The responsibility of the electoral defeat and the humiliation will lie on the Hindu electorate in general and not on him who casts his own vote at any rate on the Hindu side. Moreover the very threat of a contest in elections against the Congress on such a righteous issue is bound to compel the Congress to be more and more afraid of sacrificing Hindu interests on the altar of the fetish of a pseudo-Nationalism.

To join the national fight when and while the forces are winning, is patriotic enough. But when the fight for a righteous cause is almost lost, to persist still in rallying round its banner and refuse to betray one's conscience to the last, in spite of a general defeat and humiliation,—is simply heroic! and all that an honest soldier can individually do! If he cannot share the joy of a general victory, nothing can deprive him of the supreme satisfaction of having done his duty well. This should be the faith with which the Hindu Sangathanists should continue their contest under the present circumstances. Let us determine, even if the worst comes to the worst, to be the last of the devoted batch of the Hindu Sangathanists than to be the first of the Hindu traitors.

### Resolutions—2nd Day—Calcutta—29th December, 1939

#### THE COMMUNAL AWARD

The main subjects dealt with to-day were the Communal Award, the Hyderabad satyagraha and reforms, the Sukkur riots and the demand for the release of political prisoners.

The resolution on the Communal Award which was moved by Mr. N. C. Chatterji, General Secretary, ran:—

"The All-India Hindu Mahasabha reiterates its emphatic condemnation of the Communal Award as the basis of the present Indian Constitution and appeals to all Indians to organize a country-wide agitation for its abolition on the following, among other grounds:—

It is against all principles of Democracy and cuts at the very root of Indian Nationalism;

It retains and extends the evil of separate communal electorates fatal to representation upon a national basis on which alone a system of responsible government can possibly be built up;

It introduces the unprecedented system of statutory majority and statutory minority which is a negation of responsible Democratic Government and only accentuates communal bitterness;

It prevents the free formation and grouping of parties in the Legislature on the basis of social and economic programmes on which Democracy depends;

It has split up the body-politic and the electorate into 18 different sections or groups each of which is to elect by itself and separately its own representatives so as to render them incapable of a national outlook and common points of view, policies or programmes;

It is grossly unfair to Hindus, particularly in the Central Legislature and in the Provincial Legislatures of Bengal, the Punjab and Assam where they have been allotted a smaller number of seats than what their population-strength entitles them to;

It gives to Europeans, particularly in Bengal and Assam, excessive weightage of representation at the expense of both Hindus and Muslims;

The Mahasabha declares that there will be no peace in the country unless and until the Communal Award is annulled.

Mr. Chatterji said that if Bengal was to live the Communal Award must go. No province in India had been so hard hit as Bengal by the Award, which was a crude device to crush the province, because it was "the citadel of Indian nationalism." For Bengal, it was not a matter of mere debate, it was a matter of life and death. The Award was designed deliberately to crush and cripple Hindus. It was not an Award, but a punitive, vindictive measure to punish Hindus, particularly the Hindus of Bengal.

The Modern League, he continued, had been championing and acclaiming the Award because it wanted to foster communal differences and animosity. "We are out to destroy this Award, because we want to destroy communal animosity and bickerings," Mr. Chatterji added: "The sooner this Communal Award is expunged from the Statute Book the better for the whole of India."

After discussing the representation of various communities in proportion to their respective numerical strength, particularly in Bengal, Mr. Chatterji said that they were not quarrelling over figures and seats, but the fact that faced them was that the effect of the Communal Award in Bengal had been to set up a sectarian grouping in the political life of the province. The group that had seized power was working on communal lines and was abusing its power in order to cripple and crush the Hindus.

"The Hindus were opposed to the Communal Award on principle, not merely to secure a few more seats, but because they were opposed to a sectarian policy. They stood for a national policy and for joint electorates. Let Hindus not believe Moslem League or Congress fanatics when they say that the Hindusabhaits are communalists," he declared. "They are not. Their outlook is nationalistic, and, so far as Bengal is concerned, they will never lower the flag of nationalism."

"The Communal Award having proved disastrous for the Hindus of Bengal, it is time that they worked unitedly for its annulment. It can only be fought by a real consolidation of Hindus. We refuse to obey the dictates and flims of Mahatmas, Sardars and Pundits. We want to return genuine Hindu representatives to the legislatures, pledged to fight the Communal Award which is a menace to both Hindus and Moslems."

Seconding the resolution, *Sir Gokul Chand Narang* (Punjab) said that they wanted to do away with the Communal Award because their ideal was to form a united nation in India. So long as the Award remained, the peoples of India could not become united, nor could they hope to win Swaraj.

The present attitude of Moslems was that unless their demands were conceded the political progress of India must be held up. That attitude was an outcome of the Communal Award.

Supporting the resolution, *Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerji* observed that the Award was the outcome of a "divide and rule" policy. The scheme of separatism involved in the Award had been foisted even upon communities and parties who had not asked for it, namely, Shias, Indian Christians and Indian Women. The Award was not a concession to any particular community out of regard for its welfare. The resolution was passed unanimously.

#### SUKKUR RIOTS

The resolution relating to the Sukkur riots condemned Moslem agitation for possession of the Manzilgah, "which was never used as a mosque, which has been in possession of the Government since British rule was established 100 years ago, and which was being used for various purposes."

"The Mahasabha appealed to the Government not to yield to the demand of the Moslems, as that would result in the creation of a permanent source of communal trouble as the buildings were in close proximity to Sri Badbela, a place of Hindu pilgrimage."

It also condemned the Sind Government for "having failed firmly to deal with the Manzilgah agitation and protect Hindu life and property," and urged upon the Government to take "vigorous measures in arresting and dealing out punishment to all culprits, irrespective of their position, to rescue abducted women and children and to provide for adequate compensation to Hindu sufferers by levying a punitive tax on the Moslems concerned in the affected area."

The Sabha appealed to His Excellency the Governor to appoint an impartial committee to inquire into the causes of the riots.

*Dr. B. S. Mooney*, who sponsored the resolution, said that the only effective way of protecting the Hindu minorities in Moslem majority provinces was to establish Hindu Ministries in the seven provinces where the Hindus were in a majority. The remedy, he added, lay in the hands of the Hindus themselves, and at the next elections to the legislatures the Hindus should return only Hindu Sabha representatives, not Congress representatives. That was also the only way of protecting Hindu interests in East Bengal.

Speaking in support of the resolution, *Mr. Basantram*, President of Sukkur Municipality, said that he had witnessed the murder of Hindus and the destruction by fire of Hindu property. He alleged that in Sukkur alone over 200 murders were committed and 186 buildings burned, while the loot was worth many lakhs, (series of shame). He maintained that the ringleaders had not been arrested. On the other hand, he said three Hindu leaders who were engaged in affording relief to victims of the rioting had been deported. The resolution was carried.

## OTHER RESOLUTIONS

A resolution urging the immediate release of political prisoners was put from the Chair, and carried unanimously. Moving the resolution, Mr. Savarkar said that it was the duty of every Hindu to work for the release of these youths.

Another resolution moved from the Chair and carried unanimously demanded the restoration of temples and places of worship which had been converted into mosques or put to other use. The President explained that the resolution was a counter-move to Moslem agitation for the restoration of certain places which were at one time mosques.

Still another resolution moved from the Chair and carried unanimously urged the redress of "grievances" of the Hindu subjects of Khairpur State, in the Punjab. Mr. Savarkar said that it was part of the Mahasabha's programme to agitate for the redress of grievances of Hindu subjects in Moslem States. They had already taken up the cause of the Hindu subjects of Hyderabad State, and they intended to espouse the cause of the Hindu subjects of Bhopal.

By another resolution, the Sabha expressed satisfaction at the 'successful termination' of the civil resistance movement in Hyderabad (Deccan), characterized the reforms announced by the Nizam's Government as "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing" and urged upon that Government 'to give effect to the proposed reforms, inadequate as they are, without further delay.' The Mahasabha then adjourned.

## Resolutions—3rd. Day—Calcutta—30th. December, 1939

## N. W. F. PR. ADMINISTRATION

Criticism of the Bengal Ministry's attitude to Hindus is contained in a resolution passed by the Mahasabha, which concluded to-day.

Other important resolutions passed by the conference referred to India and the war, the formation of a Hindu "militia", India's future Constitution, and the fundamental rights of Indian citizens.

The first resolution considered related to the administration of the North-West Frontier Province, and read :—

"The Hindu Mahasabha records its emphatic condemnation of the weak-kneed policy pursued by the Government of India on the North-West Frontier of India, which has led to frequent raids in the border districts, cases of kidnapping, loss of life of Government Officers, both Indian and British, and a huge expenditure from the Indian Exchequer year after year.

"The All-India Hindu Mahasabha regards the Congress administration in the North-West Frontier Provinces as a failure inasmuch as it has failed to take effective steps for the prevention of raids and kidnapping."

Rai Bahadur Behram of Dera Ismail Khan, who moved the resolution, described some of the happenings in the Frontier Province during the Congress Administration and said that although in a minority, the Hindus of the province did not ask for more seats in the legislature or other special privileges but what they wanted was that their lives and property should be protected from tribal attacks. He said that the tribal peoples singled out Hindus for their depredations and spared Moslems.

Diwan Dasram Bagai, also of the Frontier Province, seconded the resolution which was carried unanimously.

## THE BENGAL MINISTRY

The conference then discussed the resolution on the Bengal Ministry which was moved by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. The resolution, which was passed, read :

"The Hindu Mahasabha records its strong protest against the openly communal and reactionary policy of the present Ministry in Bengal as evinced by its various legislative enactments and administrative measures calculated to curb the rights and liberties of the Hindus of Bengal and cripple their economic strength and cultural life.

"As instances may be mentioned the following: The passing of the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Act which is not only anti-Hindu but also anti-national with its introductions of separate electorates in the constitution of the Corporation of Calcutta.

"Introduction of the communal ratio in the public services ;

"Undue preference to Mohammedans in the recruitment to public services in

defiance of the recommendations of the Public Service Commission or without reference to them ;

"Discriminatory treatment against Hindu officers in public services. Posting, transferring and promoting of officers on communal considerations ;

"Moslemization of certain services, especially the educational service ;

"Lowering of the standard of efficiency and integrity of the administration by the introduction of the principle of minimum qualification ;

"Discrimination against Hindus in the matter of educational grants and distribution of stipends and scholarships ;

"Discrimination against Hindus in the matter of grants from the Public Exchequer for purposes of relief and in respect of agricultural and industrial loans ;

"Abuse of political power for the purpose of economic strangulation of the Hindus ;

"Discrimination against Hindus in the matter of licence and contracts ;

"Attempting to corrupt the Bengali language and undermine the foundations of Hindu culture ;

"Persistent negligence in the matter of checking widespread destruction and desecration of Hindu temples, idols and places of worship ;

"Unwarranted interference with the peaceful performance of Hindu religious holds and ceremonies in private houses and public festivals ;

"Interference with liberty of speech, freedom of the Press and freedom of association of Hindus ;

"Subsidizing Mohammedan newspapers out of public funds for purposes of communal propaganda ;

"Failure to take effective steps for the prevention of crime against Hindu women and for the protection of Hindu property against Moslem aggression.

"This Sabha calls upon the Hindus of Bengal to unite and organise in defence of their rights, liberties and culture under the banner of the Hindu Mahasabha against the flagrant encroachments made thereon under the policy pursued by the present Ministry. This Sabha further calls upon the Hindus of India to stand by the Hindus of Bengal in their fight for the maintenance of their just rights and interests."

Speaking in Bengali, Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mukherjee* said that a short while ago, on the motion of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, he and Mr. B. C. Chatterjee waited on the Premier and told him of certain grievances from which the Hindus of Bengal suffered on account of the policy of the Ministry. That was three weeks ago, but no reply had been received from Mr. Huq.

Proceeding Dr. Mukherjee said that the plight of Bengali Hindus was directly attributable to the Communal Award. In fairness to Moslems, it had to be admitted that the Award had not been devised by them (the Moslems), but by the British Government. If Hindus wanted to live as a community they must at all costs have the Award annulled.

Referring to the activities of the Bengal Ministry, Dr. Mukherjee said that if it worked for the commonweal, then, in spite of the Award, the Hindus would have nothing to complain of. But it had to be recorded that the high hopes which they had entertained when Mr. Fazlul Huq became Premier had not materialized. Soon after his assumption of office, Mr. Huq, he said, developed a strong communal bias, and devised measure after measure detrimental to the interests of Hindus. Dr. Mukherjee maintained that it was owing to the activities and the public utterance of Mr. Huq and some other prominent members of the Moslem League that a belief had come to be entertained by the Moslem masses that a Moslem raj had been established in Bengal. He added that, left to themselves, the Moslem masses had no strong communal bias and were willing to live in peace with their Hindu neighbours. Analysing the resolution, he said that there were in it 19 specific instances of discriminatory action by the Bengal Ministry, but the catalogue could be amplified several times. They were prepared to prove to the hilt every item mentioned in the list if they were given an opportunity to do so.

Dr. Mukherjee added that the difference between the list of grievances set forth by Mr. Huq against the Congress Ministries and that given in this resolution represented the difference between truth and falsehood. While the Hindus of Bengal demanded their rights, they desired that all other communities in the province should equally enjoy their respective rights. There should be no usurpation and no dispossession. The present Ministry had failed to hold the balance even, and its tendencies and actions had always been prejudicial to the interests of Hindus. Dr.

Mukherjee, in conclusion, urged that in all future elections to local or legislative bodies they should return men who would be able to uphold Hindu interests on an All-India basis, without, at the same time, injuring the interests of other communities.

Seconding the resolution, Mr. L. B. Bhopatkar (Poona) said that the psychological explanation of the "atrocities" which had been committed by Moslems on Hindus in the different parts of India was that they (the Moslems) were actuated by a spirit of aggrandizement, and held the belief that it was their mission to rule and the mission of others to submit. The average Hindu, on the other hand, had the mentality of defeatism and surrender. It was that mentality that was at the root of the plight of the Hindus to-day. If they gave up their spirit of defeatism and stood unitedly to protect their rights, he had no doubt that Moslems would be more reasonable and would not encroach upon those rights.

Srimati Sabitri Devi (a Greek convert) and Mr. N. K. Basu spoke in support of the resolution. Mr. S. N. Banerji, who followed, said that it was a matter of regret that there should be still four Hindu members in what he termed the "communal Bengal Ministry". He called upon the Hindus to demand their resignation. Swami Satyanand and Mr. Sasi Bhushan Gangooly supported the resolution, which was carried with acclamation.

#### THE HINDU MILITIA

The Mahasabha resolved to form a volunteer corps of its own, to be known as "Hindu Militia," and called upon Hindus between ages of 18 and 45 to enlist as members of the "Militia."

The preamble stated that such a move was necessary in view of the fact that Lord Zetland "has indirectly encouraged Moslems to regard themselves as having more relations with independent Moslem nations beyond the frontiers of India, that prominent leaders of the Moslem League, such as Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, has threatened actual revolt and civil war if the future Indian constitution is not drafted to their entire satisfaction, and that Moslems are organizing and training bands of militia of their own, such as the Khaksars who gave so much trouble to the Congress Government in the United Provinces."

Dr. Moonje said that after the declaration of war, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, announced that he would give ten lakhs of soldiers from the Punjab to fight on the side of England against Germany. The question might very well be asked what were the Hindus going to contribute? Mahatma Gandhi had said that the Congress, which some people described as a Hindu organization, could not give soldiers or money but could help England only with its moral sympathy. He left it to his hearers' commonsense to decide whether an offer of moral support would be better appreciated than an offer of men and weapons.

Dr. Moonje asked his audience to draw a picture in their minds of what would happen should England fail to defeat Germany. It was quite likely, he said, that Moslem nations across the North-Western Frontier might invade India, and the Moslems here would support them. They could well imagine what would be the fate of Hindus in such an eventuality. The danger was obvious. In the circumstances, the only remedy for the Hindus was to form their own militia.

Dr. Moonje said that every Hindu between the ages of 18-45 must not only have military training but must also know how to wield the lathi and the sword. A Hindu youth might forego literary education, but he must go to a military school and to the akhara for military training and physical culture. He called upon every Hindu family to send at least one son to the Rhonsie Military School at Nasik for military education.

Seconding the resolution, Bhai Parmanand said that the philosophy of non-violence could not be the philosophy of guiding national life. The theory of non-violence preached by Mr. Gandhi, and accepted by the Congress was against the culture, tradition and history of the Hindus. It was against the teaching of their scriptures. Dr. Amulyaratan Ghose, Mr. Anandapriya Kale, Professor Dehpande and Mr. Bindheswari Prasad also supported the resolution, which was carried.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA & WAR

Mr. C. M. Saptarkhi, President, the Maharashtra Hindu Mahasabha, moved a resolution on "War and Defence of India," which read:—

"In view of the statement made by His Majesty's Government that it has declared war with a desire to safeguard the vital principles of Freedom and Democracy as against the rule of Force, and in view of the fact that nowhere in these

greater necessity for the application of these principles than in India, the All-India Hindu Mahasabha declares :

"That as the task of defending India from any military attack is the common concern of England and India, and as India is unfortunately not in a position to-day to carry out that responsibility unaided, there is ample room for whole-hearted co-operation between India and England and that in order to make such co-operation effective, His Majesty's Government should immediately take steps :

"To introduce responsible Government at the centre.

"To redress the grievous wrong done to the Hindus by the Communal Award, both at the Centre and in the Provinces—particularly in Bengal and the Punjab where the Hindus have been reduced to the position of a fixed Statutory Minority to all principles of Democracy, with their representation in the Legislatures reduced far below what they are entitled to even on the basis of their population strength.

"In order to inspire the people of India to feel that the Indian Army is the National Army of the people of India and not an Army of Occupation of the British, to remove all artificial distinctions between the so-called "listed" and "non-listed" classes or "martial" and "non-martial" races, and to accomplish the complete Indianization of the Indian Army as early as possible.

"To modify the Indian Arms Act so as to bring it on a par with what prevails in England.

"To expand on an extensive scale the Indian Territorial Force and the University Training Corps, to establish such military organization in provinces where they are not in existence at present, and to increase substantially the admission of cadets at the Indian Military Academy.

"To make adequate arrangements for the training of the people in all branches of the Defence Force so as to make it ready for all emergencies".

Mr. *Saptarshi* explained that the resolution did not ask Hindus to non-co-operate with the British, neither did it ask them to give unconditional co-operation. It was in effect responsive co-operation which was the policy advocated by the late Mr. Balgangadhar Tilak. It laid down certain conditions on the fulfilment of which the Hindu Mahasabha would give its co-operation to the British. Mr. *Saptarshi* then explained in detail the terms of the resolution. Mr. *N. C. Chatterji* supported the resolution, which was carried.

#### DOMINION STATUS

The following resolution on "Independence and Dominion Status" was put from the Chair and carried :—

"The All-India Hindu Mahasabha reaffirms complete Independence as the goal of India's political aspirations, and urges that a Constitution based on Dominion Status as defined in the Statute of Westminster be conferred immediately on India.

"The All-India Hindu Mahasabha emphatically protests against the recent pronouncements of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State to the effect that the further constitutional progress of India must depend upon a solution of its communal and minority problems, since they flagrantly violate the fundamental principles of a democratic constitution, resting ultimately upon the vote of the political party commanding a majority and not subjected to the vote of the minorities."

#### LEAGUE DEMAND OF ROYAL COMMISSION

Dr. *B. S. Moonje* then moved a resolution criticising the observance of a "Day of Deliverance" by the Moslem League and the demand for the appointment of a Royal Commission by Mr. Jinnah.

The resolution said that Mr. Gandhi's policy had widened the gulf between Hindus and Moslems so much that there appeared to be no practical chance of bringing about Hindu-Moslem unity in the near future : that Moslems had been made much of both by the Congress and the Government and had been given concessions, at the expense of constitutional and administrative Hindus, much more than what were their due on a proportion of population.

In view of these facts, the Mahasabha declared that there was no justification for the appointment of a Royal Commission, but, if a Royal Commission was appointed, then its terms of reference should also include an investigation of various acts of oppression and atrocities committed by Moslems on Hindus in both Moslem-majority provinces and Moslem-minority provinces." The resolution was carried.

#### HINDU SANGATHAN & BUDDHI

Another resolution was passed urging the necessity of the Hindu *Sangathan* and *Buddhi* movement for the strengthening and consolidation of Hindus of India.

This is to be accomplished by the encouragement of physical culture among Hindu youths, economic uplift of the Hindus, social uplift of Hindu Backward classes, removal of the spirit of jealousy and separatism between different provinces and different sections of the Hindu community and reclamation of people who for some reason or other have gone out of the Hindu fold and their readmittance into the Hindu community by the process of *Suddhi*.

#### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The Mahasabha also passed a resolution on Fundamental rights, defining the equal rights of "all citizens of India, whether male or female residing in or outside British India" as, among other things, "a decent standard of living, free and compulsory primary education; defence of India against foreign aggression; the right to bear arms, to enjoy freedom of conscience; freely to profess and practice their respective religious and social customs and usages, subject to public peace, order and morality; and protection by the State of the respective language, script and sculpture.

#### OTHER RESOLUTIONS

By another resolution the Sabha called upon "all Hindus to take the utmost care in securing a correct record of their numbers, and to offer all possible co-operation in that regard to the census authorities."

It urged the Government to guarantee correct enumeration of the different communities by providing for a body of joint enumerators chosen from the different communities.

The Sabha adopted a social programme for the "consolidation of Hindus," whether residing in or out of British India, including a mass contact movement.

By another resolution, it urged the redistribution of provincial boundaries on the "natural basis of affinities of race, language, culture, customs, and usages."

A donation of Rs. 38,000 a year for three years was announced by Seth Jugal Kishore Birla for helping the Hindus of Bengal in respect of industrial, commercial and agricultural education and also for training workers in connexion with the Hindu *Sangathan* movement. The amount will be handed over to Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Mr. S. N. Banerjee, who will nominate a board of management and settle details for giving effect to the endowment.

Bringing the proceedings to a close, the President, Mr. V. D. Savarkar, remarked that the session had been successful beyond all expectation. For this result their thanks were particularly due to Bengal Hindu leaders, such as Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherji, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, Mr. B. C. Chatterji, Mr. N. C. Chatterji, and Mr. S. N. Banerji. Henceforward the Hindu Mahasabha must be reckoned a power which could not be ignored. It was not in the hope of seeing a *tamasha* that people in there had attended the Sabha's meetings. People had come because they felt deeply the plight of Hindus. He appealed to Hindus to vote for Hindu Mahasabha candidates, in the elections to legislatures and municipal and local bodies. The proceedings concluded at 9 p. m.

### Working Committee meeting—Poona—30th. July 1939

#### SUSPENSION OF HYDERABAD SATYAGRAHA

An emergent meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met at Mr. Laxman Balwant Bhopatkar's residence in Poona under the presidency of Mr. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on Sunday, the 30th. July 1939 to consider the situation arising out of the declaration of reforms by the Nizam of Hyderabad in connection with the civil resistance movement carried on by the Hindu Mahasabha. The meeting was held in camera and was not open to the press or the public. The discussion continued for four hours and almost all leaders participated in the deliberations. The president cleared the position by saying at the outset that although he was empowered by the Working Committee with all the powers, yet the statement issued by him would not in any way bind the Working Committee in arriving at a decision. The president declared that the Hindu Mahasabha even up to this day continued sending jathas in the *dharma yuddha* and that no suspension or calling off would take place before the Working Committee's decision.

The meeting adjourned at 4-30 p. m. and met again at 9 in the night at Mr. Bhopatkar's residence and passed the following resolution:—

"Whereas the civil resistance campaign against the anti-Hindu policy of the Nizam's Government, launched and conducted so valiantly up to date by the Hindu



Sanghatanists all over India, has succeeded to a great extent in welding the Hindu Sabhaites, Arya Samajists, Sanatanists, Sikhs, Jains and all constituents of the Hindu nation so as to present a consolidated front for the first time in the recent history of our race and roused pan-Hindu consciousness throughout the land which led them all to struggle with unparalleled enthusiasm under the common Hindu banner in defence of Hindu rights and in vindication of Hindu honour and succeeded in baffling and overawing all anti-Hindu forces—the open hostility of Muslims on the one hand and the covert antipathy of the British Government as well as the treacherous attitude of Congressites on the other—to such an extent as recording a moral victory in favour of our Hindu Sanghatanists' forces.

"And whereas the heroic sacrifices on the part of those thousands of thousands of Hindu civil resisters have at last compelled the Nizam's Government to announce reforms which it refused to do for the past 25 years and which, however halting, stinging and tainted with flamboyant pretensions to everlasting Muslim supremacy in the State, are nevertheless due to the constitutional breach effected by the Hindu forces in the citadel of fanatical autocracy that has dominated the State up to date, and persuaded the Nizam to plead for the spirit of accommodation, peace and amity and to promise the working of the reforms so as to lead to further constitutional expansion,

"The Working Committee, in consultation with and the consent of several leaders of the Nizam's State, resolves that the civil resistance campaign be suspended for the time being with a view to find out how the Nizam's Government will meet the fundamental grievances of the Hindu subjects in the actual operation of the reforms. It assures the Nizam's Government that if the hopes and promises held out by the Nizam in the announcement of the reforms are realised in practice and the officers are strictly compelled (to be impartial ?) in carrying out the day to day administration, the Hindus will try to work the constitution in a spirit of responsive co-operation. It must be pointed out that the Muslim community should realise from what happened that the only way of securing peace and progress for them too lies through their amicable, equitable and cordial relations towards the Hindus.

#### AMNESTY

The second resolution of the Working Committee further emphasized the fact that the Nizam should be pleased to grant forthwith a general amnesty to all civil resisters, whether Arya Samajists or Hindu Sabhaites and whether they hail from the State or from outside. Any delay or failure in this cannot but be a source of further irritation and affect adversely the attempt of ushering in a period of cordial co-operation and constitutional progress.

#### HINDU PARTY IN THE STATE

The third resolution of the Working Committee drew pointed attention of all Hindu Sanghatanists in the State and outside to the important fact that the above suspension of the civil resistance can only mean the beginning of an intensive and constructive constitutional movement. The Hindus in the State should immediately form a Hindu party for rousing, educating and consolidating their forces so as to be able to protect the Hindu interests—political, social and religious, and press on for securing further constitutional expansion.

The fourth resolution of the Working Committee wholeheartedly supported the Arya Samajists' demands for a clarification of the religious points by the Nizam's Government.

#### TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS

The fifth resolution of the Working Committee pays tribute to the memory of the martyrs who laid down their lives in the *dharma yudha* against the Nizam's anti-Hindu designs and expresses its abiding gratitude towards those Hindu Sanatanists who had gone to the front and braving tortures, assaults and imprisonments, fought for the Hindu cause. It records a sense of appreciation of thousands of Hindu Sanghatanists who each in his own way, whether by financing, propagating or supporting the movement, participated and acknowledges special indebtedness to Mr. Yeshwant Rao Joshi of Hyderabad, Mahatma Narayanram, Dharmaveer Bhopatkar, Chandra Kanan Sharda and such other prominent leaders.

#### BHOPAL AND RAMPUR

The sixth resolution of the Working Committee appointed a committee consisting of Shri Govind Prasad Singh of Bihar, Mr. Ramkrishna Singh of

Bilaspur, Mr. Joti Shankar of Cawnpore, Mr. Ganga Ram of Ahmedabad and Mr. Ganpat Rai of Delhi to inquire the Hindu grievances in Bhopal and Rampur States.

#### RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

The seventh resolution of the Working Committee demands that the Bengal political prisoners now on hunger-strike should be forthwith released and the Government would be held responsible for serious consequences if there is loss of life.

The eighth resolution expressed sorrow for the death of Lala Har Dayal in exile and a sense of abiding gratitude for the services rendered by him in the cause of Indian independence. The meeting terminated late at night.

### Working Committee Meeting—Bombay—10th. Sept. 1939

#### THE HINDU MAHASABHA & WAR

India and the war" was the subject of a lengthy resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha at Bombay on the 10th. September 1939. Representatives from various provinces participated in the meeting which was specially convened to consider the situation arising out of the declaration of war.

The Mahasabha condemns "the spirit of bargaining and of taking advantage of the present crisis for the promotion of purely communal interest at the expense of national well-being.

The resolution says that as the task of defending India from any military attack is of common concern to the British Government as well as to Indians and as the latter are not in a position to carry out that responsibility unaided, there is ample room for co-operation between India and England.

To make such co-operation effective, the Mahasabha urges the introduction of responsible government at the Centre, revision of the Communal Award, modification of the Arms Act to bring it on a level with that prevailing in England and expansion of the Indian Territorial Force. The resolution also urges removal of the distinction of martial and non-martial classes, complete Indianization of the Army as early as possible, and intensification of the training of cadets of the Indian Military Academy in all branches of warfare so that an effective defence force may be always ready.

The Government is also asked to take steps to encourage Indian firms to start the manufacture of aero-engines and motor engines and implements of modern warfare so that India may be self-sufficient in armaments.

By another resolution the Mahasabha calls upon the Hindus throughout India to organize a Hindu national militia of those between the ages of 18 and 40.

### Working Committee Meeting—Bombay—19th. Nov. 1939

#### THE SABHA ON VICEROY'S STATEMENT

The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, which met in Bombay on the 19th. November 1939 under the presidency of Mr. V. D. Savarkar, passed a number of resolutions touching the present political situation in the country in the light of the Viceroyal pronouncements and the speeches in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords concerning India.

On the Viceroyal statement the Committee passed a resolution emphasizing that the Hindu Mahasabha refused to look upon Dominion Status as the ultimate goal, but insisted upon it only as an immediate step to be taken towards the final goal of absolute political independence, and that a constitution based on that status should be conceded to India at the end of the war at the latest.

The resolution added, "A definite declaration to that effect can alone evoke a responsible willing co-operation on the part of India. The British Government must bear in mind that India can never extend a willing co-operation unless she feels that the cause of her freedom is likely to be served in a substantial measure by offering responsive co-operation."

With regard to the Advisory Board contemplated in the statement of His Excellency the Viceroy, the Mahasabha welcomes it "if it is made to serve as a tentative measure with powers more or less equal to a Federal Board of Ministers and is entrusted without reservation with matters concerning Indian defence as that of a responsible Council of Ministers".

The resolution adds, "But much will depend on its composition. The Hindu Mahasabha must secure such representation on it as in keeping with the proportion to population of the Hindus".

#### HINDUS AND CONGRESS

By another resolution the Mahasabha reiterated that the Congress did not and could not represent the Hindus and as such no constitution or administrative settlement arrived at behind the back of the Hindu Mahasabha between the Government on one hand and the Congress and the Muslim League on the other, would be binding on the Hindus unless and until it was sanctioned by the Hindu Mahasabha.

It warned the League and the Congress that "it will oppose any humiliating injustice done to the Hindus by levying a kind of electoral 'Zexia' as the Communal Award does at present. The Hindus must have full representation in proportion to their population; they will tolerate nothing less and they demand nothing more".

The resolution added that the depressed classes alone should be given weightage on reservation and special protection for a definite period of time.

#### LABOUR AND CAPITAL

An appeal to capital and labour to co-ordinate their efforts in a spirit of patriotism and mutually just accommodation was the subject of another resolution. The Committee called upon capital and labour in the country to utilise the present opportunity afforded by the war by working up the existing industries and starting new industries and to capture and establish the home market against foreign competition.

The Committee condemned the alleged repression of Hindus in the Frontier Province and urged the Central Government to increase the strength of the Hindus stationed there. It further asked the Government to increase the Sikh personnel in the recruitment for the Indian army.

On the question of the war and India's participation in it, the Sabha reaffirmed its stand taken in this regard and adds, "The Working Committee opines that India is not bound on any altruistic grounds to extend, as His Excellency the Viceroy expects her to do in his statement, co-operation beyond what the self-interest and self-defence of our nation may demand."

## The All India Muslim League

### Working Comm. Meeting—Bombay—2nd. & 3rd. July 1939

"A meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League was held on the 2nd and 3rd July 1939 at Mr. M. A. Jinnah's residence, Bombay. The following members were present: Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Syed Abdul Aziz, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Esak Salt, Sir Ali Mohammad Khan Dhlavi, Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhuri, Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. Chowdhury Khaliquzzaman, Sir Abdoola Haroon, the Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, Syed Abdur Rauf Shah, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan.

The committee considered the correspondence that had passed between Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Syed Abdur Rauf Shah Sahib regarding the appointment of a Muslim minister in O. P. The committee was of opinion that no individual province should negotiate or come to any settlement with the Congress with regard to the Hindu-Muslim question in its area and that if any such proposals are received from the Congress, intimation should be sent to the effect that the matter should be referred by the Congress to the President or the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League.

#### INDIAN NATIONALS ABROAD

The All-India Muslim League expressed its full sympathy with Indian Nationals in South Africa in their struggle against the obnoxious and unjust segregation measures and extended to them all possible help.

The Working Committee strongly urged the Government of India to take prompt steps for the protection of the rights of Indians in Ceylon.

The Working Committee urged the Government of India to take immediate action to secure justice and fair treatment to Indian nationals in Belgian Congo.

#### PALESTINE ARABS' DEMANDS

The Working Committee having examined the White Paper on Palestine and having heard the Muslim League delegates, was of opinion that the proposals embodied in the White Paper are most unsatisfactory and disappointing, and are totally unacceptable.

The Committee urged the British Government to meet the Arab demands and redeem the solemn pledges made to the Arabs and the Muslims of India who stood by the British solidly in the Great War.

The Working Committee resolved that a Palestine Fund be opened forthwith for the relief of the dependents of those who lost their lives or suffered in the struggle for independence. The following committee, with powers to co-opt, was appointed to devise ways and means of collecting money for the Palestine Fund and remitting the same to Palestine through the President of the All-India Muslim League:—Sir Abdool Haroon Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui, Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Eask Sait, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Mr. Chowdhuri Khaliquzzaman (Convenor.)

The Working Committee expressed its appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqui and Chowdhuri Khaliquzzaman who went to Cairo, London and the Near East in connection with the Palestine question.

It was resolved that the Madras Provincial Muslim League be affiliated to the All-India Muslim League.

Consideration of the report of the Economic Programme Committee was postponed.

The question of the formation of Muslim National Guards could not be considered as the report of the Committee appointed by the Council in this connection had not yet been received. It was decided that the committee be requested to submit their report, at the latest, by the end of September.

#### ACTION AGAINST SIR A. H. GHAZNAVI

The Committee considered the explanation of Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi regarding his resignation from the Muslim League Party in the Central Assembly. The Working Committee declined to consider the request for acceptance of his resignation from the Council of the All-India Muslim League as it was sent by Sir A. H. Ghaznavi after the receipt of the notice from the Honorary Secretary calling for an explanation why disciplinary action should not be taken against him regarding his conduct in resigning from the party in the Central Assembly and defying the resolutions of the Council of the All-India Muslim League. The Committee resolved, after giving full consideration to all the papers, documents and evidence, that the name of Sir A. H. Ghaznavi be removed from the Council of the All-India Muslim League, and further that he should be disqualified from being a member of the League organisation for next four years from July 3, 1939.

#### MUSLIMS IN STATES

The following resolutions were next passed.—

"The Working Committee has received reports and representations of maltreatment and injustices being done to the Muslims in the Indian States of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bhavnagar, Cutch and Patiala. The Committee most earnestly urges the Rulers of the States concerned to redress the grievances and protect the lives, honour and properties and liberties of their Muslim subjects, thereby creating a sense of security amongst them and preventing the situation from taking a serious turn.

"The Working Committee has every sympathy with the Muslim Muhajirin from Jaipur who have been undergoing great hardships and suffering since they left their homes. The Committee urges the Jaipur Darbar to meet the just demands of the Jaipur Muslims without further delay, so that the situation that has been created may not worsen, and at the same time advises the Muslims of Jaipur to suspend civil disobedience and organise themselves effectively, as their salvation lies in their own inherent strength.

#### HYDERABAD AGITATION

"The Working Committee of the Muslim League views with grave concern the situation that is being created by the mischievous activities and propaganda of the

Arya Samajists and Hindu Maha Sabhaites all over India in organising and dispatching jathas to Hyderabad with the ostensible object of vindicating their religious rights in order to coerce the State administration. The Working Committee warns the Arya Samaj and the Maha Sabha organisations that the offensive bearing of these jathas and the shouting of provocative slogans has created intense bitterness among the Muslims and unless these provocative jathas are stopped forthwith, there is a grave danger of sporadic clashes developing into widespread inter-communal strife throughout the country. The Working Committee urges the Provincial Governments and the Paramount Power to take immediate and adequate action in order to stop this mischief, which seriously threatens the peace and tranquillity of the country."

The Working Committee considered the request of the Bihar Provincial Muslim League to launch civil disobedience against the Wardha scheme of Basic Education. The Committee decided that, in the first instance, the Bihar Provincial League should send a memorial representing their complete case against the Wardha Scheme to the Governor-General, the Governor and the Prime Minister of Bihar, and report to the Working Committee the result of the representations. The Committee in this connection also advises all other Provincial Leagues to do like.

#### HOME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

The Committee also passed the following resolution :—

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League views with grave apprehension the resolutions, as reported in the Press, passed by the recent Home Ministers' Conference held at Simla, particularly Resolution No. 1, which read as follows : "It is recommended to all Provincial Governments that they should undertake a concerted campaign against propaganda of a communal nature and against incitement to violence of any kind whatever." As it is likely that, in the absence of an authoritative explanation as to what is meant by the phrase "propaganda of a communal nature" the Congress Ministries which are opposed to the Muslim League movement will abuse the opportunity thus afforded to them by victimising the Muslim League organisations, and the Muslim Press and by stifling the general Muslim public opinion on any and every pretext. The Working Committee, while requesting the Home Department, Government of India, to issue a public statement explaining what the Home Ministers' Conference meant by the phrase "propaganda of a communal nature," warns the Congress Ministries of the great consequences which will follow any move on their part that is likely to result in the misuse or abuse of the decisions of the Home Ministers' Conference in order to muzzle legitimate Muslim public opinion in those provinces.

#### WARDHA SCHEME

The Working Committee disapproves of the Wardha scheme of education on the following grounds among others. Apart from its origin, conception and communal aspect, there are fundamental objections to the scheme : (1) The scheme is calculated to destroy Muslim culture gradually but surely, and the Working Committee is of opinion that the text books are entirely unacceptable. The scheme is intended to secure the domination of Hindu culture and language. (2) It imposes the Congress Party ideology, and aims at inculcating, among others, the doctrine of Ahimsa. (3) Its objective is to infuse the political creed, policy and programme of one party namely, the Congress, in the minds of children. (4) It has neglected the question of providing facilities for religious instructions. (5) Under the guise of the name of Hindustani, the scheme is meant to spread highly Sanskritised Hindi and to suppress Urdu which is really the *lingua franca* of India at present. (6) The text books prescribed and provisionally sanctioned by certain Provincial Governments are highly objectionable from the Muslim point of view, in that they are not only offensive to the feelings and sentiment of Muslims, but are mainly devoted to the praise of Hindu religion, philosophy and heroes, minimising Islamic contribution to the world, and to India in particular and ignoring their culture, history and heroes, and speaking of them with scant courtesy.

#### MUSLIMS IN CONGRESS PROVINCES

The Committee considered the position of Muslims in the Congress-ruled Provinces, and as full representations have already been made to the Governor-General recently, the Committee decided to postpone this matter till next October. Before taking any definite step, it was decided to await the action of the Governor-General. The Committee hopes that the Governor-General would support the

representations that have been made to him, and will not fail to discharge his obligations as required by the Statute in safeguarding the rights and interests of Muslims.

## The Council Meeting—New Delhi—27th. & 28th. August 1939

### MOSLEM LEAGUE AND WAR

The Council of the Moslem League met at New Delhi on the 27th. August for six hours. The discussion centred round what should be the Moslem attitude in the event of war. Altogether 20 speakers took part in the discussion. Before concluding the debate, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the League, addressed the members of the Council for over one hour, explaining his view on the subject. Press representatives and the public were excluded from the meeting.

The Council unanimously passed the following resolution, which was moved by Haji Sir Abdulla Haroon :

"This council, while deploring the policy of the British Government towards Moslems of India by attempting to force upon them, against their will, a constitution, and in particular the Federal scheme as embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, which allows a permanent hostile communal majority to trample upon their religious, political, social and economic rights, and the utter neglect and indifference shown by the Viceroy and the Governors in the Congress-governed provinces in exercising their special powers to protect and secure justice for the minorities, and while deploring the policy of the British Government towards the Arabs in Palestine in refusing to meet their demands, holds the view that in these circumstances, if the British Government desires to enlist the support and sympathy of Moslems in the world, and particularly of Indian Moslems, in future contingencies, it must meet the demands of the Moslems of India without delay.

"The Council considers it premature at present to determine the attitude of Moslems in the event of a world war breaking out. The Council meanwhile directs the Foreign Committee to get into touch with Islamic countries and to ascertain their views and if any sudden contingency arises the Working Committee of the All-India Moslem League shall have the power to decide this issue."

When the Council assembled in the afternoon Sir Currimbhoy Ibrahim (Bombay) moved a resolution that Moslems of India should not co-operate with Britain in the event of war. He said that Britain was not loyal and true to Indian Moslems. He further complained that Britain and the Congress were trying to suppress the spirit of Moslems.

Haji Sir Abdulla Haroon (Karachi) then moved his amendment. The Nawab of Chhattari and Sir Raza Ali supported this amendment which was finally adopted.

When the Council met on the next day, Mr. Ashiq Hussain Batalvi moved two resolutions urging disciplinary action against the Premier of the Punjab, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, (1) for making a statement in the Punjab Assembly on the Indo-British Trade Agreement alleged to be against the policy of the League; and (2) for submitting a Federal scheme. The first resolution was withdrawn when the President explained that the League had no defined policy on the subject, and the second when the President held that members were entitled to their own views.

Mr. Batalvi, by another resolution, pressed for disciplinary action against members of the Moslem League who were on the Army Indianisation Committee. This resolution was also withdrawn.

There was a lively debate on a resolution relating to the reported failure of the Moslem League Organizing Committee in the Punjab to establish a Punjab Provincial League. The resolution suggested that the organizing committee be dissolved forthwith.

Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan moved an amendment suggesting that the organising committee should be given up to November 15 to establish a Punjab Provincial Moslem League, failing which the present organising committee would be regarded as dissolved and the President would take such action as he thought fit.

The resolution was amended and passed.

The session of the All-India Moslem League Council concluded on the 28th. August after passing over a dozen resolutions, the most important of which concerned the Princes' attitude towards Federation; Baluchistan; Indians in North Africa; the communal problem; and appointment of a committee to strengthen the provincial Moslem Leagues.

The resolution dealing with the communal problem urged upon the Government of India to take necessary steps to arrive at a decision on the vexed question of music before mosques because the communities concerned had been unable to come to a settlement among themselves.

The Council while fully sympathizing with the Indians in South Africa in their struggle against the imposition of further disabilities, expressed the view that there was ample justification for Indians joining the common non-European front with the object of fighting racialism and the colour bar.

The resolution on the Indian Princes' attitude towards Federation congratulated the Princes and His Exalted Highness the Nizam in particular on the stand they had taken against the introduction of the Federal scheme and appealed to them to continue to oppose the scheme.

The Council condemned the policy of the British Government in depriving the people of Baluchistan of their political rights and demanded the introduction of provincial autonomy in that province.

#### LEAGUE & PUNJAB PREMIER'S ATTITUDE

*Syed Ali Mohd. Rashidi's* resolution relating to India in the event of war, stated:—

"Notwithstanding the fact that the Council of the All-India Moslem League, in its meeting of December 4, 1938 had laid down that no responsible member of the Moslem League shall make any pronouncement and notwithstanding also of the fact that Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan was present at that meeting, the latter has issued a statement on that very subject on August 25, at the most two days before the Council of the All-India Moslem League had to consider it in its meeting, which statement, in the opinion of this Council, is worse than his previous statement of September 1938 to which exception had been taken by the Council in its meeting of September 4, 1938. The Council, in these circumstances, is compelled to place on record its sense of regret at his attitude and to make it clear that Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan's statement on the question relating to war does in no way represent the views of the Moslems of India."

To this *Sir Raza Ali* moved an amendment which stated "that the opinions and sentiments expressed by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan in his statement to the Press on August 25 in no way represents the view of the Moslems of India."

This amendment was carried by a majority. The Unionist Party members and their supporters voted against the amendment.

The House agreed to the withdrawal of the original resolution of *Syed Ali Mohd. Rashidi* and the amendment was passed as a substantial resolution.

During the discussion on the original resolution, together with *Sir Raza Ali's* amendment, *Syed Rashidi*, the mover of the original resolution, questioned the soundness of the principle. He said that the question before them was whether any member of the Council could issue a statement without consulting the working committee of the Moslem League. On a matter of principle, the action of Sir Sikandar in issuing a statement was subversive of discipline. He thought that the League should take notice of it.

*Prof. Inayat Ullah* (Lahore) said that *Sir Sikandar's* statement was in conformity with the policy of the Moslem League Party in the Central Assembly. The Punjab Premier's statement, he added, in no way affected the policy of the Moslem League. He warned the House that the passing of such a resolution would impede the work of the Moslem League in the Punjab. If they so desired, the matter could be referred to the working committee of the League. He therefore opposed the original resolution.

*Sir Raza Ali*, moving his amendment, expressed the opinion that *Sir Sikandar* had blundered in issuing the statement of August 25. He, however, drew the attention of the members to the attempts that were being made to divide the Moslems and said nothing should be done which would compel *Sir Sikandar* and his party to break away from the League. He explained that his amendment did not censure the Punjab Premier without giving him an opportunity to explain his position. He merely made it clear that *Sir Sikandar's* statement represented his individual views and did not necessarily accord with the opinion of Moslems.

*Mawlana Zafarullah Khan* supported *Sir Raza Ali's* amendment and expressed himself against the original resolution of *Syed Rashidi* which, he thought, went further and required disapproval of *Sir Sikandar's* statement.

*Mr. Fazal Huq*, the Bengal Premier, observed that the resolution was not

of circumstances which were unfortunate. He did not know what made Sir Sikandar issue that statement. He was of the opinion that since Sir Sikandar was not present at the meeting, Sir Raza Ali's suggestion contained in his amendment, was sufficient for their purpose. The amendment, while meeting their objects, was not unnecessarily provocative.

Mr. Huq, continuing, said that the Moslems were faced with a serious situation. On the one hand, in seven provinces the Congress was in power and their experience showed that it was determined to crush the Moslems socially, politically and economically. On the other hand, the British Government held out no prospect of giving consideration to Moslem demands and grievances. In the circumstances, Mr. Huq thought that provincial autonomy was a failure and that it was almost breaking down. He concluded by supporting Sir Raza Ali's amendment.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah ascertained the sense of the House on the resolution and the amendment. In doing so, he emphasized that whatever their decision it should be unanimous. He thought that Syed Rashidi's resolution meant disapproval of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan's action without hearing him. It also amounted to a vote of censure on the Punjab Premier without giving him an opportunity to explain his position.

There was another amendment to the final resolution in the name of Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan which, however, failed through the Council accepting Sir Raza Ali's amendment. Mr. Waheed Khan's amendment sought to condemn the action of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, to make it clear that it in no way represented the views of the Moslems of India, and further requested the working committee to take disciplinary action against him.

#### COMMUNAL PROBLEM

Mr. Fasilul Huq, the Bengal Premier, next moved the following resolution dealing with the communal problem :

"The Council of the All-India Moslem League views with alarm the unceasing recurrence of communal disturbances throughout India arising out of the question of music before mosques ending in many cases in disastrous consequences to the Moslem community, and urges upon the Government of India to take such steps as may be necessary to arrive at a decision on this question particularly because the communities concerned have been unable to come to a settlement among themselves. The Council of the All-India Moslem League records its deliberate opinion that in case a solution of this question is not arrived at, which can be accepted by the communities as a satisfactory solution, there is a grave menace to public peace and tranquillity which would render ordered government impossible in India."

Mr. Fasilul Huq, after emphasizing the seriousness of this problem of unfortunate communal trouble, pointed out that in Bengal they had been enforcing certain rules to regulate music before mosques, regardless of any communal considerations. On the contrary, he said, in the United Provinces and Bihar, the Moslem minorities have suffered in consequence of Governmental measures to check disturbances. He, therefore, suggested that the Government of India should take the initiative in this matter and frame rules which could be uniformly enforced in different provinces in order to check communal trouble resulting from music before mosques. The resolution was passed after a brief discussion.

### Working Committee Meeting—New Delhi—18th. September '39

#### THE WAR RESOLUTION

The following is the text of the Moslem League resolution on War passed by the Working Committee at its meeting held at New Delhi on the 18th. September 1939 :—

"The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League appreciates the course adopted by H. E. the Viceroy in inviting Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League and appraising him of the position regarding the international situation resulting in war and his own views, to be conveyed to the Muslim League. The Working Committee have given their most earnest consideration to H. E. the Viceroy's views conveyed to them by the President and also to the pronouncement made by the Viceroy since the declaration of war by Great Britain as also His Excellency's address to the members of the Central Legislature on September 11, 1939.



"The Committee are of opinion that the views expressed by the Council of the All-India Muslim League by its resolution No. 8 of August 27, 1939, in the following words: 'While deploring the policy of the British Government towards the Muslims of India by attempting to force upon them against their will a constitution and in particular the Federal scheme as embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, which allows a permanent hostile communal majority to trample upon their religious, political, social and economic rights and the utter neglect and indifference shown by the Viceroy and the Governors in the Congress-governed provinces in exercising their special powers to protect and secure justice to the minorities and towards the Arabs in Palestine in refusing to meet their demands, holds the view that in these circumstances if the British Government desires to enlist the support and the sympathy of the Muslims of the world and particularly of the Indian Muslims in future contingencies it must meet the demands of the Muslims of India without delay,' are the true sentiments and opinions of the Mussalmans of India.

"The Working Committee appreciate the declaration of H.E. the Viceroy, which is in the interest of India and particularly the Mussalmans, that the Federal Scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 has been suspended. They wish that instead of its being suspended, it had been abandoned completely and desire to convey to His Majesty's Government that they should do so without further delay. The Committee desire to make it clear that they do not endorse the "Federal objective" of His Majesty's Government referred to by H.E. the Viceroy in his address to the members of the Central Legislature and strongly urges upon the British Government to review and revise the entire problem of India's future constitution de novo in the light of the experience gained by the working of the present provincial constitution of India and developments that have taken place since 1935 or may take place hereafter.

"The Committee, in this connection, wish to point out that Muslim India occupies a special and peculiar position in the polity of India, and for several decades it had hoped to occupy an honourable place in the national life, government and administration of the country and worked for a free India with free and independent Islam in which they could play an equal part with the major community with a complete sense of security for their religious, political, cultural, social and economic rights and interests; but the developments that have taken place, and especially since the inauguration of the provincial constitution based on the so-called democratic parliamentary system of government and the recent experiences of over two years have established beyond doubt that it has resulted wholly in a permanent communal majority and the domination of the Hindus over the Muslim minorities whose life and liberty, property and honour, are in danger and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Congress Government in various provinces.

"That while Muslim India stands against exploitation of the people of India and has repeatedly declared in favour of a free India it is equally opposed to the domination of the Hindu majority over Mussalmans and other minorities and vassalization of Muslim India and is irrevocably opposed to any "Federal objective" which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and a parliamentary system of government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of the country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national State.

"The Muslim League condemns unprovoked aggression and the doctrine that 'might is right' and upholds the principles of freedom of humanity and 'that the will of the strongest irrespective of right and justice cannot be allowed to prevail.' The Committee express their deep sympathy for Poland, England and France. The Committee, however, feels that real and solid Muslim co-operation and support to Great Britain in this hour of her trial cannot be secured successfully if His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy are unable to secure to the Mussalmans justice and fairplay in the Congress-governed provinces where today their liberty, person, property and honour are in danger and even their elementary rights are most callously trampled upon. The Committee strongly urge upon His Majesty's Government and Viceroy and Governor-General to direct the Governors to exercise their special powers where any Provincial Ministry fails to secure justice and fairplay to the Mussalmans or where they resort to oppression or interference with their political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with the sacred promises, assurances and declarations repeatedly made by Great Britain, in consequence of which these special powers were expressly embodied in the Act. The

Committee regret to say that so far these special powers have remained dormant and obsolete and the Governors have failed to protect the rights of the Mussalmans under the threat by the High Command of the Congress that exercise of these special powers on the part of the Governors will lead to a crisis in all the Congress-governed provinces where they are in solid majority.

"While the Muslim League stands for the freedom of India, the Committee further urge upon His Majesty's Government and asks for an assurance that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All India Muslim League nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval.

"The policy of the British Government towards the Arabs in Palestine has wounded deeply Muslim feeling and sentiment and all representations in that behalf have had no real effect so far. The Committee once more urge upon His Majesty's Government to satisfy the Arab national demands.

"If full effective and honourable co-operation of the Mussalmans is desired by the British Government in the grave crisis which is facing the world today and if it is desired to bring it to a successful termination it must create a sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans and take into its confidence the Muslim League which is the only organisation that can speak on behalf of Muslim India.

"At this critical and difficult juncture the Committee appeal to every Mussalman to stand solidly under the flag of the All-India Muslim League with a solemn and sacred determination to take every sacrifice, for on it depend the future destiny and honour of the 90 millions of Mussalmans in India.

### Working Committee Meeting—New Delhi—22nd October '39

#### THE LEAGUE ON VICEROY'S STATEMENT

The Muslim League passed at New Delhi on the 22nd October '39 a lengthy resolution expressing satisfaction with certain parts of the Viceroy's statement but asking for further clarification, and authorising the President, Mr. Jinnah, to take steps to get the clarification necessary. If he is satisfied with the clarification, he is empowered to give an assurance of co-operation to the British Government in the prosecution of the war. The following is the text of the resolution :—

"After a careful examination of the statement of His Excellency the Viceroy dated October 17, 1939, the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League appreciate that His Majesty's Government have emphatically repudiated the unfounded claim of the Congress that they alone represent all India, and note with satisfaction that His Majesty's Government recognise the fact that the All-India Muslim League alone truly represents the Muslims of India and can speak on their behalf; also that the rights and interests of the minorities and other important interests concerned have been duly recognised.

"The Committee, however, feel constrained to state that the points of vital importance raised by the Muslim League in their statement dated September 18, 1939, are not precisely and categorically met. The Committee therefore venture to suggest that, in order to secure co-operation on an equal footing, as desired by His Excellency, further clarification and discussion of those matters that are left in doubt and have not been met satisfactorily are necessary with a view to arriving at complete understanding, which alone would enable the Muslim League to co-operate in a matter which concerns not only the Muslims of India but the country at large.

"The Committee cannot wholly accept the narration of facts culminating in the enactment of the Government of India Act of 1935 as given in the statement of His Excellency, but do not think it necessary to enter into a controversy regarding those inaccuracies, historic and otherwise. The opposition of the Muslim League is not merely to the 'details' of the plans embodied in the Act of 1935 and the reconsideration thereof, but their demand is that the entire problem of India's future constitution should be wholly examined and revised *de novo*. The Committee reiterate emphatically that no future plan of India's constitution will be acceptable to the Muslim League unless it meets with their full approval.

"The Committee also considered the proposal of His Excellency the Viceroy for the establishment of a Consultative Group but cannot at present express any opinion with regard to it until its status, constitution, powers, scope and function are fully known, but welcome further consultation regarding this matter as proposed by His Excellency in his statement.

"In view of the urgency of the matter, the Committee hereby authorise the President to take such steps as he may consider proper to get the doubts removed and secure complete clarification of His Excellency's statement and, if the President is fully satisfied, the Committee empower him to give an assurance of support and co-operation on behalf of the Muslims of India, to the British Government for the purpose of the prosecution of the war."

The Working Committee of the League also passed the following resolution :—  
"The Working Committee hereby empower the President to advise, guide and issue instructions to Muslim League Parties in the various provincial legislatures in the event of some sudden emergency arising. The Muslim League Parties shall give effect to or carry out such instructions as may be given by the President."

## The Jamiat-ul-Ulema Conference

Working Committee Meeting—Meerut—16th. to 18th. Sept. '39

### RESOLUTION ON WAR

The following resolution defining the attitude of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema towards the present European war was adopted by the Working Committee of the Jamiat at its Meerut session held on September 16, 17 and 18 :

"Britain justifies its participation in the Polish-German war under the cover of specious arguments and calls upon its dependencies and colonies and other countries to assist it in its defence of freedom and democracy. The Viceroy of India has also appealed to Indians in the name of democracy and freedom to help the Allies."

"The committee has given its most anxious consideration to, and has most thoroughly examined every aspect of, the present international situation in the light of the lofty teachings of Islam, the demands of patriotism and the highest principles of ethics. The committee has also examined in detail the arguments advanced by Britain in defence of its stand and the underlying motives of the British Government in going to war against Germany, in order to arrive at right conclusions."

"So far as the present British policy is concerned, we are sorry to state that it does not provide any valid basis for encouragement for the Indian people. Looking at the first plea, that is, defence of freedom of nations, we are confronted with the happenings in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Abyssinia, and Albania, where freedom was wantonly sacrificed and the dictators carried on a campaign of fire and destruction and perpetrated all sorts of terrors and barbarity against those free people. Britain silently watched this spectacle. Even if it may not be proved that Britain was a party to the occupation of Abyssinia by Italy, it cannot be controverted that Britain did not stand for the freedom of the weaker nations and allowed the German and Italian dictators to enslave them. Moreover, Britain is itself responsible for keeping many nations in bondage and has adopted a deliberate policy of violence and oppression to keep them in subjection and to suppress their struggle for freedom. We are faced with tyranny that reigns in India and Palestine. The bombing of Waziristan and other frontier tribes and the aggressive occupation of Hadramaut in South Arabia are facts which may not be denied. It is difficult to put any favourable construction on these events and actions on the part of Britain. Does Britain sincerely desire the freedom of nations and is it willing to defend the liberties of independent people ?

"On examination, the second plea of the defence of democracy and the extermination of dictatorships, is also found to be equally untenable. We fail to appreciate how Britain is concerned in the matter if the German nation is reconciled with dictatorship in its own country. After all, the German nation alone is concerned with the form of its government. Shall we understand that if there were a democratic form of Government in Germany instead of dictatorship which has committed aggression against Poland, we should have justified the aggression just because Germany was a democracy ? Is Germany's action in Poland any worse than the barbarities in Palestine at the hands of the so-called British democracy ?

Are we expected to justify the atrocities and bombing operations in Waziristan and against other independent frontier tribes just because Britain happens to be a democracy?

"So far as India is concerned we are confronted with the latest exhibition of British democratic policy in the declaration of war by the Viceroy on behalf of India without even caring to consult Indian public opinion. In any case, we fail to understand why Britain involved itself in the horrors of a war in defence of democracy but did not care to defend the Spanish Republic and is not willing to establish a democratic form of Government in its colonies and dependencies.

"The Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind is committed to the democratic principle. It firmly believes that the principles which are enunciated in the teachings of Islam stand for a nobler ideal of democracy than the one demonstrated to the world by the so-called European democracies. Under Islamic democracy the majorities and minorities live in perfect peace and security. The Jamiat pins no faith in the European dictatorships but it regrets to find that the British policy in this war does not reveal the slightest indication of love of democracy.

"Looking at the third plea of supporting the oppressed we fail to understand why Britain did not come to the rescue of Tripoli, Syria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia and Palestine, which were no less oppressed than Poland, and allowed them to be victimised by the oppressors.

"The fourth specious plea is the one relating to the fulfilment of promises and the sanctity of agreements. We are only too painfully aware of the continuous and deliberate breach of promises ever since the days of Queen Victoria, and even earlier, and in particular the breach of promises made by Britain during the last Great War. In spite of the repeated declaration made by responsible British statesmen regarding the territorial integrity of the various States which fought against them and the sanctity of the holy places of Islam, the victorious Allies dismembered the Turkish Empire and violated the sanctity of the holy places of Islam with impunity.

"In its deliberations, the committee had to consider the whole of this background and has come to the conclusion that the committee cannot subscribe to these specious pleas or consider these arguments as valid. It has noted the fact that a number of Governments and individuals from amongst the Muslims have hastened to pledge their support to Britain on account of their political exigencies and for selfish motives and are now trumpeting these pleas. We fail to see how even they can efface from the hearts of the Muslims the memory of a continuous chain of events from the time of the Great War right up to the present and persuade a God-fearing Mussalman or a genuine patriot to support Britain in the present situation.

"We have also to look at the question from another angle. We have to consider whether our co-operation with Britain in the war will help the best interests of India or the Mussalmans. We fail to draw any positive conclusions from historical antecedents. India made every sacrifice and underwent unbearable sufferings to help British imperialism during the last Great War, and prolonged its bondage in consequence. What is there to assure Indians that helping Britain in the present juncture will secure their national freedom and that British imperialism in the event of another victory will not treat Indians with greater highhandedness under the cover of the so-called democratic reforms? We are alarmed at the recent amendment to the Government of India Act which has crippled whatever little autonomy was given to the provinces.

"The Jamiat-ul-Ulema has always stood for the ideal of complete independence. It considers the securing of independence for India its religious, political and ethical duty.

"Considering all these factors together, the working committee of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind finds no valid reason to support British imperialism in this war. It is the considered view of this committee that in the present critical situation the Muslims of India, in fact all Indians, should immediately unite to formulate a common policy and arrive at a decision which should be in keeping with our national self-respect and dignity. Herein lies the real guarantee of their freedom and emancipation.

# The All India Shia Political Conference

Annual Session—Chapra—29th. to 31st. December 1939

## DEMAND FOR JOINT ELECTORATES

The three-day sitting of the All India Shia Political Conference concluded on the 31st. January 1939 after passing a number of resolutions including one expressing its intention to keep itself aloof both from the Congress and the Muslim League and another demanding the introduction of joint electorates and the abolition of separate electorates. The Conference was presided by Mr. Kalbe Abbas.

The resolution on the decision to dissociate itself from the Congress and the Muslim League evoked much discussion. Mr. Jaffar Hassain, General Secretary of the Conference, withdrew from the debate because, in his opinion, it was "harmful" for the Shia community to keep itself aloof from the Congress. The resolution adopted reads as follows :—

"This session of the All-India Shia Political Conference considers as its ideal a constitution of freedom in which the rights of all the Indian minorities, especially those of the Shia community, may be effectively safeguarded. This session considers it necessary to champion all movements based on nationalism and patriotism launched by any political party. But as the critical period of the political evolution through which India is passing at the present moment is manifest and as manifold events bear testimony to the fact that the political and religious interests of the Shia minority are in jeopardy and the manner in which these rights are being trodden over is unparalleled in the circumstance, when the life of the Shias as a community is in danger and when neither party—either the Congress or the Muslim League—is doing justice to the Shias nor is protecting their rights in the opinion of this Conference, the Shias have no practical alternative left but to strengthen their political organisation internally from the platform of the Shia Political Conference and to keep themselves aloof as a community both from the Congress and the Muslim League.

"It is also necessary in the opinion of the Conference to make it clear that the Muslim League, which has always trampled upon the feelings and susceptibilities of the Shia minority, claiming in the same breath to be the only representative body of the Muslims of India, is utterly wrong in its pretension because in so far as the Shias are concerned, as a sect they have never considered the Muslim League to be their representative and they declare that any pact in which the Muslim League enters into with other bodies without consulting the Shia Political Conference will not be binding on the Shias of India."

The Conference reiterated its faith in joint electorates with "such reservation and weightage that exist today in the different provinces" and demanded the abolition of separate electorates.

Resolutions urging on the U. P. Government to cancel the punitive tax which was being levied from the Shias at Lucknow, to rescind their communiques of November 11, 1938, and to withdraw as early as possible all pending cases against eight Shias in the Benares Camp Jail were also adopted.

The Conference expressed its sympathy with the Shia sufferers of the Anatolia earthquake.

That the Governors of the various provinces should exercise their special powers for the protection of the minorities in respect of the Shia Community and is one of the eight demands by the Foundation Committee for the presidency of the Maharaj-kumar of Mahmudabad at Chapra.

The demands will be placed for consideration before the All-Parties Conference to be held at Lucknow.

Other "demands" dealt with the rights and representation of Shias in the Provincial Legislatures, Cabinets and local bodies and safeguarding the religious and social rights of the community.

# The A. I. Anti-Communal Award Conference

Fourth Session—Calcutta—27th. August 1939

## THE WELCOME ADDRESS

The fourth session of the All-India Anti-Communal Award Conference was held on the 27th. August 1939 at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta under the presidency of Mr. M. S. Aney, M. L. A. (Central). A large number of delegates including several prominent Hindu leaders attended the session, which was opened by Sir *Prafulla Chandra Ray*.

Sir *Manmatha Nath Mookerjee*, former acting Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, in welcoming the delegates, said, "What we are here to-day to condemn, was condemned in no uncertain voice, when it came into being, by all nationalist Hindus and Muslims alike." An award, he said, presupposed arbitration and validity of the arbitration rested upon a reference by which the parties connected were bound by its result. The Communal Award had none of those features in it. He condemned those who believed in the "neither-accept-nor-reject" formula and observed that although this course might have been prompted by a spirit of nationalism, it was a much too generous spirit of nationalism which sought to barter away the birthright of a community for the benefit of separatists and communalists. And to my mind, it is not an ingredient of true nationalism to agree to measures inherently unsound and unfair to one or more communities in order to purchase the temporary goodwill of other communities, unduly favoured by those measures.

Proceeding, the speaker said, "There can be no pretext whatsoever for saying that the decision, to which the appellation of Award has been fastened to give it a binding and unalterable character, is not an Award. And if the decision has wronged any community, as it undoubtedly has, the Government cannot say that the last word has been said. For, though wrongs done to individuals may remain unremedied, history does not give us any instance of a wrong done to a community remaining eternally unredressed".

"We find that the working of the Award has been even more disastrous than that foreshadowed by the British Premier. We have to-day legislative and administrative measures frankly conceived in the interests of the majority population, nay more, for the purpose of humiliating and crushing the minority which is admittedly more intellectual, more politically minded and contributes a very much more proportionate amount to the public funds. Indeed so far as my Province is concerned, the attempt is frankly to rob Peter in order to pay Paul".

## OPENING ADDRESS

In opening the conference, Sir *Prafulla Chandra Ray* observed: "During the last two years and a half the communal decision at work has proved a veritable apple of discord, bringing rapidly in its train legislative measures and fundamental changes in administrative policy which have been disastrous to the best interests of the province". He expressed his indignation at the fact that "the authorities at Delhi and Whitehall do not seem even now to be in a mood to do their duty to India in respect of that disease in our body-politic—the hated communal decision".

Separate electorates, Sir *Prafulla Chandra* continued, were an evil, the gravity of which could hardly be exaggerated. A national system of Government could never be built upon such a foundation. Over and above this, the distribution of seats among the different communities had been grossly unfair, particularly in Bengal and the Punjab.

Concluding Sir *Prafulla Chandra* said, "Let us all of us take a vow to carry on a continuous and relentless fight against the so-called Communal Award until it is completely rooted out of the soil of our country".

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In his Presidential address, Mr. M. S. Aney declared that those who were minimising the extent of the incalculable mischief which the Award had already created and was likely to create by calling it an essentially domestic question had done great injustice not merely to the Hindus but to the Indian nation as a whole. All the politically-minded Indians whether they belonged to the Congress or some other

political organisations like the Liberal Federation, the Sikh League or the Hindu Mahasabha, stood for independence, that is, the establishment of a democratic responsible government in India. The principles of democracy and nationalism were the very soul of the political struggle carried on in this country for more than half a century by the Indian National Congress. Any scheme promulgated either by the British Government or by the leaders in India of any community, which threatened to impede the growth of the spirit of democracy and nationalism must therefore be opposed tooth and nail by all those who stood for those principles. Those who stood upon communal privileges and communal settlements between Hindus and Muslims implied the existence of some third party to enforce the terms of such an agreement, a position which was certainly incompatible with the ideal of independence.

Referring to certain recent speeches of Muslim leaders, Mr. Aney said that those who had read these should not have failed to notice a distinct emphasis given by all of them on the recognition of their existence as a distinct and separate nation in India. The idea was being persistently dinned and various schemes of Federation based on the conception of federating Muslim and Hindu India were being published for discussion by the leaders of the Muslim community. The ideal of one indivisible state known as Indian nation had receded into the background. The inauguration of provincial autonomy without the creation of a powerful responsible government at the centre was in itself an evil. It became more aggravated as power was given to and exercised by people who were already communally minded. Insistence on the retention of residuary powers in the provinces was also due to unwillingness on the part of the Muslims to owe allegiance to the Federal state which they feared would be dominated mainly by the Hindus who were a majority community in the State. Thus the exercise of provincial power by representatives returned on the communal ticket in a few provinces had virtually annihilated in them all regard for the conception of Indian nationalism and Indian democracy.

Apart from the injustice done to the Sikhs and the Hindus in the Punjab and Bengal, Mr. Aney continued, there were many more dangers lurking under the Award than met the eyes on the surface of it. It was an insult to the Hindus to be told that the minority living in this country had created political importance and that they were, therefore, entitled to greater rights and privileges of citizenship than the Hindus. The Poona Pact had especially aggravated the difficulties of Bengal Hindus and made them more helpless. It had inflicted the unkindest cut on the body-politic of Hindu Bengal which had already been crippled by the Award. Mr. Aney expressed the hope that this Pact would open the eyes of all Indians to the dangers incidental to the extraordinary methods to which Mr. Gandhi now and then resorted at the bidding of his "inner voice." The Award, Mr. Aney added, was entirely opposed to the spirit and policy on which the work of building the Indian nation was being carried on for the last half a century and more. He appealed to members of the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee as well as Mr. Gandhi to think of the drastic effect which the Communal Award had already produced and the havoc which it was likely to cause in the near future.

Mr. Aney regretted that although Congress Ministries had come into power in eight out of the eleven provinces, no concerted effort had been made by the Congress to bring constitutional pressure on His Majesty's Government in order to alter the denationalising provisions of the Award. They had no doubt that if the Government of these eight provinces exerted pressure on His Majesty's Government to open the question for fresh consideration it would not be easy for the latter to turn down their demand. He advised the Conference seriously to think of setting up an efficient machinery to carry on the fight against the Award and asked his audience to examine the constitution of the Congress Nationalist Party carefully and to see whether its membership should not be kept open to every one who was opposed to the Award and not merely to Congressmen as at present.

#### SIR NRIPOEN SINGAR'S ADDRESS

Sir Nripendranath Sengupta addressing the conference, said that the object of the conference was to convince the powers that be of the justice of their cause, relying on the additional fact that the working of the last two years and a half had justified their apprehensions and to persuade other communities, or at least sections of them, that their grievances were legitimate. Referring to the possibility of the first object being

achieved, he said, that past history could lead to one conclusion, namely, either the injustice of allocation of 119 and 80 seats was done deliberately, or without proper consideration. If it was the latter, blunt refusal to remedy a palpable, demonstrated and almost admitted wrong for fear of disturbing the peace of mind of those who had acquired an unmerited gain did not place His Majesty's Government in an enviable light. Having regard to their past history, was it reasonable to expect that the powers that be would now behave in a different way, or that for sake of justice they would disturb a hornet's nest by displeasing some communities?

"But whether they can afford to be just or not, we must continue to repeat our unanswerable claim, by reference not merely to arguments which have existed at all times, but also by reliance on what is happening as the result of the communal decision," added Sir Nripendra. "I venture to assert that our claim is irresistible for justice being done, however belated, to a community which is being seriously hurt by grave injustice—an injustice to which the only answer which could be given was 'We had the power to do it, we have done it, we cannot and we do not want to give reasons for our action. It is no good wasting our time by showing that our decision has been unjust and unfair. Whatever it is we are not going to make any change.' One would have thought that some provision would be made for modifying the decision if it was shown after actual working that a community had been unfairly dealt with, but not only had that not been done, but the omission had been deliberate.

Outlining a programme for the future, Sir N. N. Sircar observed, "We must try to convert to our views those who still believe in the formula 'Neither accept nor reject.' I venture to suggest that, although we cannot wipe off the past, yet recrimination about past events and conduct will serve no useful purpose, and must be avoided. The task may not be easy, because Bengal Congress is part of All-India Congress and the communal shoe does not pinch the Hindus in Congress Provinces.

"There should be consolidation of Hindu opinion and efforts in Bengal, and the necessity for the same being reflected in the Bengal legislature. For the success of this effort, constructive work will be necessary, and not merely speeches, processions and taking out boys and girls of schools and colleges.

"The artificial barrier between Scheduled and non-Scheduled castes must be made to disappear, and this can only be done by fair and sympathetic treatment, by acts, and not by mere declaration, remembering we have to atone for past shortcomings.

"For the next Assembly elections, let not a single Hindu vote be cast for a Hindu candidate, unless he will be willing to openly discard the formula 'Neither accept nor reject,' and equally openly to join not only in the protest against the Communal decision, but to declare that he will try to preserve, safeguard and promote Hindu rights, subject to the interest of the whole Province and justice for other communities." Concluding, Sir N. N. Sircar urged that the spade-work and preliminaries for this work should be taken up from now, and not left for a future date nearer the next election."

#### RESOLUTIONS

The Conference adopted a number of resolutions including one recording its disapproval of the Government's decision on the communal problem "inasmuch as it retained and extended the evil of separate communal electorates and provided statutory majorities with separate communal electorates, which were wholly opposed to the principle of responsible Government."

The decision, the resolution stated, which had wrongly been called the "Communal Award" was calculated to impede the growth of a common national feeling and to accentuate communal bitterness, and grossly unfair to the Hindus, particularly in the Central Legislature and in the Provincial Legislatures of Bengal, the Punjab and Assam; it gave to Europeans, particularly in Bengal and Assam, excessive representation at the expense of both Hindus and Muslims.

The Conference was of the opinion that a system of responsible government could only be based on joint electorates and not on "an anti-national system of representation such as the Communal Award provides for."

Pointing out the serious consequences of the operation of the Award, the Conference regretted the attitude of the Congress towards the question and urged it to revise its policy and strive for the reversal of the Award. It also requested all political organisations and individuals opposed to the Communal Award to be united in fighting the Award.



# The U. P. Political Conference

Twenty second Session—Muttra—28th & 29th November 1939

## THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Over 30,000 people attended the 22nd. session of the U. P. Political Conference held at Muttra on the 28th. November 1939. Enthusiastic scenes were witnessed in *Mahendra Pratap Nagar* when Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and other leaders arrived at the pandal. Prominent among those present were Messrs. Mohanlal Saxena, J. B. Kripalani, Purshottamdas Tandon, Dr. K. N. Katju, Sri Prakash, Mohanlal Gautam, Dr. Muralilal, Dr. Ashraff, Dr. Shaikat Ansari and Dr. R. M. Lohia. Messages wishing success to the Conference were read out from Pandit G. B. Pant, and Mr. Shiva Prasad Gupta (Benares).

*Hakim Brijlal*, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcoming the delegates said socialism was the only cure for all these ills.

*Pandit Jawharlal Nehru* spoke in Hindi for one and a half hours. He began with reference to the war in Europe and said he was happy to state that its repercussions in India were most welcome as they had succeeded in composing their internal differences in Congress. Pandit Nehru proceeding emphasised that their demand for *Swaraj* was an old one and had nothing to do with the present war. When faced with the problem arising out of the war in Europe and the attitude India should adopt, the Congress sought clarification of British Government's war aims in relation to India. He regretted to say that the British Government's reply to their demand was most unsatisfactory and therefore the Congress Working Committee had no alternative but to call upon Congress Ministries to resign. He reiterated the Congress demand for a Constituent Assembly to frame a suitable constitution for India and said that he saw no prospect of a settlement between the British Government and India so long as this main Congress demand was not accepted.

The communal problem, he said, was not a major issue and was capable of solution if India's right to be treated as a free country was conceded. He exhorted the gathering to follow the Congress constructive programme and take to *Swadeshi* and *Khadi* in particular. Concluding, Pandit Nehru remarked that they were in no hurry to launch a struggle and would not take the offensive, but at the same time they should prepare themselves for now for future contingencies.

Resolutions—2nd. Day—Muttra—29th. November 1939

## INDIAN STATES

The session concluded this evening after passing unanimously two resolutions relating to Indian States and the Tenancy Bill and another on the constructive programme by an overwhelming majority of votes. It was also resolved that the next annual session be held at Mainpuri.

The resolution on Indian States welcomed the awakening and growth of political ideas among the people of Indian States and regarded it as a happy sign for the freedom of India. It advised the people of States within the province and the neighboring States to press their demands with determination and to be non-violent.

The resolution also expressed disapproval of the action of Indian Princes in offering help to Britain for the defence of democracy without consulting the wishes of the people, and added that it would be fit and proper for the Princes to put this principle in practice in their States.

*Mr R. S. Pandit*, who moved the resolution on Indian States, criticised the policy of Indian Princes in helping Britain in the present war without consulting their people. He advised the princes to adapt themselves to the changing conditions. *Dr Ashraf* said that conditions even in the progressive States were far from satisfactory. *Mr. Nehru*, before putting the resolution to vote, said that Indian States today were a relic of the past. He thought that the ultimate responsibility of the happenings in Orissa States (Ranpur), Limbdi, and other Kathiawar States lay on the British Government. *Mr. Nehru* remarked that conditions were really intolerable even in the so-called progressive States. He concluded by observing that no political advance existed. The resolution was passed unanimously.

## THE U. P. TENANCY BILL

*Mr. S. K. D. Patil* moved a resolution on the U. P. Tenancy Bill, which welcomed this measure initiated by the Congress Ministry and successfully carried through both the Houses of the U. P. Legislature. *Mr. Patil* explained, the

beneficial provisions of the measure and described how they would help the ryots in a period of severe economic depression like the present. He characterized the Bill in its present form as a moderate measure and said that he failed to understand the delay in the Governor giving his assent to it. Proceeding, he observed that the peasants must rely on their own strength and agitate to get the measure placed early on the statute book.

The resolution stated that the responsibility for giving effect to the Bill now rested with the Governor of U. P., and hoped that the demand made by millions of peasants of the province for speedily bringing this Bill into operation would be satisfied immediately. After Dr. Z. A. Ahmad had seconded the resolution it was passed unanimously amid applause.

#### CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

There was a 3-hour discussion on the constructive programme resolution which was on the lines of the recent resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Allahabad. The resolution contained directions for the guidance of Congressmen in the province giving effect to the general Congress constructive programme with special reference to the popularising of *charkha*, the production and sale of khadi in the village and communal unity. It provided for the establishment of mandals in districts and for the opening of camps for volunteers. It would also be obligatory on the volunteers to explain to the people of villages the Congress demand for a constituent assembly and its implications. Mr. *Purshottamdas Tandon*, who sponsored the resolution, made an earnest appeal to the people to have implicit faith in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership and carry out his direction. He was convinced that they would develop their organisational strength by giving effect to the constructive programme laid down by Mahatma Gandhi.

After Pandit *Kesh-dev Malaviya* had seconded the resolution Mr. G. N. Dixit moved an amendment seeking to delete the clause which enjoined on the members of the district and town Congress committees to play *charkha* regularly daily and thus set an example to others. This amendment was supported by half a dozen speakers of socialist views all of whom, while reiterating full confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, objected to spinning *charkha* as a matter of principle. The amendment, when put to vote, was lost, and the resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority. The Conference then terminated.

## The Delhi Socialist Conference

Annual Session—New Delhi—2nd & 3rd July 1939

#### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

"Ever since the Tripuri Congress, confusion has arisen in the ranks of the Congress Socialist Party", observed *Acharya Narendra Deo*, in the course of his presidential speech at the Delhi Socialist Conference, which was held in the Municipal Hall, New Delhi on the 2nd July 1939.

There was great resentment, added Mr. Deo, against the National Executive in certain quarters at its attitude of neutrality as regards the Pant resolution. The leadership was accused of vacillation at a crucial moment and it was said that the Executive, in taking the decision of neutrality, departed from the party line. There was lack of understanding amongst Party members about the Party line itself. Other groups had taken advantage of this confusion and, as a result, the party was passing through a crisis.

The President admitted that the leadership was partly responsible for the present state of affairs and that sufficient care was not taken in the enrolment of members. "We have allowed other groups to enter the Party and these groups function as such within the Party itself. This is against all principles of Party organisation. The Party has thus largely lost its character and has become a platform," Mr. Deo added. "The Party has, by its growing influence in the Congress, also succeeded in correcting the ultra-Leftist tendencies of certain Socialist groups in the country. The attitude of Socialists of all ranks towards the Congress has

radically altered during the last five years. It has decidedly become favourable towards the Congress attitude taken by the Congress Socialist Party from the very beginning towards the national organisation."

In order that the Congress Socialist Party should continue to represent this healthy tendency, it was necessary that the Socialists should first set their house in order. All important questions should be thrashed out in the Party and decisions should be taken democratically and every effort should be made to make the Party as homogeneous and compact as possible. Strict party discipline should be enforced in the enrolment of members and they should insist on quality rather than numbers. Certain organisations had got jealous of the growing power of the Congress and they wanted to undermine its influence and prestige. Socialists would protect the Congress from such attack and they should do nothing which might weaken the great organisation to which Socialists belonged.

After explaining at length the reason why the Socialist Party took a neutral attitude at the Tripuri Congress session on the Pant resolution, Mr. Narendra Deo stated that the Left was weak and divided and at present no section could initiate and lead the struggle single-handed. It had been said that the present leadership did not want a struggle in the near future. Even if that be the case, he asked, "Should we not, by energetic action, create an atmosphere in the country which will compel the leaders to implement the resolution of the National Demand? Let the so-called Left give proof of its earnestness; let it translate the Congress resolutions into action and those who lag behind will soon have to follow suit. Concrete political action alone can move the Congress as a whole towards implementing its own resolutions."

If the slogan of unity for immediate struggle was correct, Mr. Deo observed, their stand of neutrality was the only correct attitude consistent with their policy. Opposition to the Pant resolution, if it had succeeded, would have brought about disunity and they would have been held responsible for it. If there was no unity to-day in the Congress, Congress Socialists were not to blame.

While he criticised the Left for its shortcomings, Mr. Deo also did not absolve the Right of its share of blame, and stated that the Right had done nothing to implement the resolution of the National Demand. The resolution had been relegated to the background and steps were being taken which led one to think that the High Command had no other programme except the parliamentary programme to implement. Regarding the working of the Congress Ministries in the provinces, the President remarked that offices were accepted to strengthen the national movement and not to demonstrate fitness for rule. If the Ministers found that it was no longer possible for them to fulfil that purpose they should frankly say so and vacate office. "We can hold ourselves responsible for provincial administration," he said "only so long as we are in a position to utilise these new opportunities for strengthening the nation. Such opportunities are every day proving less and less and things have come to such a pass that the parliamentary programme can be fulfilled only by subordinating every other programme to it. If that be so and if we are called upon to make a choice, we shall vote for direct action." Concluding Archarya Narendra Deo said, "There is phenomenal awakening in the country and the international crisis is deepening and one does not know when the world will be involved in a war. Let us not throw away our opportunities. Let those whose vision is clear, formulate a plan of action and by following a correct line and by resolute action demonstrate to the people the immediate necessity of making elaborate preparations for the impending struggle. Let the Congress Socialist Party realise that it has to perform these urgent tasks in conjunction with all those who think and act alike".

Second Day—New Delhi—3rd. July 1939

MR. JAI PRAKASH'S SPEECH

Addressing the Conference on the next day, the 3rd. July, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party explained the aims and objects of the Party and denied the impression held in some quarters that the Socialists wanted to create a split in the Congress. Mr. Narain declared that the Socialists had no quarrel with the Congress as a political organisation but they did not completely agree with its programme which, they felt, was not sufficiently advanced. They also wanted to counter the growing tendency towards "parliamentarianism" among Congressmen. The Congress Socialist Party had been successful, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, in existence for the last five years and during this period had successfully endeavoured to radicalise the Congress programme.

and to direct that body along the path of revolution. The only way they could achieve that object was to organise effectively the Kisans and labourers in their own organisations under the aegis of the Congress. The Socialists never cared about the leadership of the Congress—the personalities, in whose hands all the power of the Congress was concentrated. They were only concerned with its programmes. It was their conviction that the old Congress programme of attaining Swaraj had outlived its utility; it had become too antiquated to cope with the modern needs. Hence the necessity of a new programme based on full recognition of the greatly changed conditions. Referring to the charge that the Socialists were weakening the parent body (the Congress), Mr. Jai Prakash Narain pointed out that the chief task to which the Socialist Party had addressed itself was the formation of Kisan Sabhas and Mazdoor Sabhas. This they were doing to bring Kisans and Mazdoors in large numbers into the Congress fold. The harnessing of the tremendous force behind the Indian masses, consisting chiefly of peasants and labourers, could not but greatly strengthen the Congress. The Congress was not opposed to the organisation of Kisans and Mazdoors in their own organisations, and therefore, it could not be said that the Socialists were impairing the forces of the Congress by diverting them into different channels. Mr. Jai Prakash concluded by expressing satisfaction at the progressive consolidation of the forces of the Left, which, he declared, augured well for the future of India. He also opposed the participation of Indians in imperialist wars.

#### RESOLUTIONS

A number of resolutions were adopted by the conference. It urged that more concerted efforts should be made to prepare the country for a nation-wide struggle to enforce the national demand and urged that for this purpose a national volunteer corps should be immediately formed.

The conference condemned the policy adopted by the Governments of Bengal and the Punjab against the Kisan and labour movements in their respective provinces. It also strongly criticised the Punjab Government for enforcing the Princes Protection Act.

By another resolution, the conference welcomed the co-ordination of the activities of Socialists and Communists, which it regarded as the only solid basis for consolidating the forces of the Left.

The conference urged the Congress Working Committee immediately to convene a joint conference with the Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples Conference in order to devise ways and means to resume the struggle in the States with the full backing of the Congress.

A resolution on war was also adopted, requesting the Congress to take up, *inter alia*, active anti-war propaganda on hand, especially in the chief recruiting areas. It also desired the Congress Governments in the various provinces to make their position absolutely clear to the British Government that they would resist the working of the proposed amendments to the Government of India Act relating to recruitment.

## The Agra Zamindars' Conference

Fifth Session—Benares—1st. & 2nd July, 1939

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The fifth session of the Agra Province Zamindars' Conference was held at Benares on the 1st July 1939 under the presidency of *Rani Pritam Kunwar* of Sahasgar Bilari, who in the course of her address said :—

In 1933 Sir Malcolm (now Lord) Hailey, while replying to the deputation of Jhansi Khatiyas Sabha remarked that 'authority under the new constitution will rest with those who best know how to organize themselves to grasp it.' Those were very wise words. The Congress that was mentally more alert and politically better organised than the landholders defeated the latter in the last elections and formed their own Government in 8 out of the 11 provinces. The zamindars had to pay penalties for their incapacity to take the time by the hand.

disputes rendered united action difficult and there is little wonder that the National Agriculturist party collapsed like a house of cards with the first breath of unfavourable wind. I was never very hopeful about the future of this party as it was built on shifting sands. It is an unpleasant memory that much before the date of elections the ranks of the zamindars were divided into two groups, each preparing to eclipse the other in the future formation of the Ministry. Though an open rupture was avoided yet backdoor intrigues weakened the none-too-well organized ranks of the landholders and the election results reduced them to the position of a small minority in the Assembly.

The Congress Government on getting into saddle launched on a career of reforms. A Tenancy Bill far-reaching in its effects and still wider in its reactions was introduced in the Lower House and has now been sent to the Upper Chamber for ratification. It is idle to bank on the revision powers of the Council as the Congress Government control a majority in the combined session of the two Houses. The Tenancy Bill in its present form is quite stiff from the point of view of the zamindars and it was a great mistake on our part to reject the proposal of arbitration by the Congress high command. It is true that the high command would not have altogether changed the anti-landlord complexion of the Bill, but it is certain that as a result of this arbitration some of its more rigid clauses would have been relaxed. The opposition offered by the zamindars to the Tenancy Bill was insincere (and I seek pardon for some plain-speaking) because instead of plainly telling the people that they could not immediately part with so many of their rights, the spokesmen of the zamindars indulged in unconvincing arguments and said what they did not mean. The masses did not believe them and their critics laughed in their sleeves. A general charge on the Tenancy Bill was uncalculated and it served the purpose of the Government very well. It provided their agents with a very easy handle to further their propaganda against the zamindars in the villages. If this did not widen the gulf between the zamindars and the tenantry, it in no way helped the cause of the landlords and did not bring the zamindars and the masses together. Nor did it favourably influence the British Government. It was unkind to accuse them of an alliance with the Congress against the landed magnates. More than themselves it was the British Government that saved the zamindars from collapse and decay.

The present political weakness of zamindars is neither due to their betrayal by the British Government nor due to the hostility of the Congress. It finds an explanation in loss of confidence by the tenantry in their good intentions. In the past we neglected the interests of the masses and this attitude of apathy worked up a feeling of revolt in their mind that found expression in their new alignment with the Congress. Our future is of course dark, but it is not without many silver lining. The lost ground may be regained, the landlords can form their own Government and capture political power, provided they close up their ranks and put before the country a really liberal programme for the uplift of the poor masses. It is no use passing high-sounding resolutions, if it is not intended to put them into practice. Since the coming of the Congress into power the landlords have organized several major and many more minor conferences with a view to formulating their future line of action. But the net result of these conferences was nil and nobody ever took pains to translate intentions into actions.

In a world full of changing ideas, in an age of revolutionary upsurge, it is the man of action and not the man of ideas that carries the day. An average Indian zamindar, if he is anxious to preserve his class, must not fight shy of the democratic forces and must work, with the sleeves up, in the remote dull corners of the countryside. It is by personal contact with the masses that he can hope to recapture political power. It is by making big sacrifices that he can reduce the economic hardships of the masses, without which he has no reason to hope to win their confidence and support. Many great minds, it has been truly observed, have failed because they have neglected the study of mass of men. It was necessary on the other hand to mix with the herd, to enter into its feelings, to study its wants and make attempts to eliminate them. Jupiter had to appear in the form of a peasant in order to succeed in his earthly enterprises.

The goddess of politics like the goddess of fortune is fickle and political scenes jump up with sudden bounds. The ups and downs in the political fortunes of the Liberals and the Conservatives in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century are the best instances in point. A sense of security destroys the vigilance of powers and those who are in a minority to-day need not despair of their political

future. As nobody could foresee the results of the last elections, it is equally difficult to make any forecast about the results of the next elections. The Congress is placed in power to-day and might be supposed to have fifty years of power before them, but the rise of the zaminders to power is not a foolish hope.

What the Congress has done the zaminders can also do. To that end they should strike a new note, break new grounds and organize themselves on the lines of the Conservatives in England and combine with other stable elements of the country to form compact bloc taking its stand on certain up-to-date political and economic principles. They should defend the past in so far as it is likely to live and look towards the future with a progressive mind. They should give a bold direction to a generous policy inspired by love of the masses and capable of winning them. This requires experienced leadership. Happily the ranks of the zaminders are not bankrupt of talent. We have the Maharajkumar of Vizianagram, Rai Govind Chand Sahib, the Raja Sahib of Tirwa, Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Rao Krishna Pal Singh of Awagarh to mention only a few of them—all of whom are competent enough to guide us. In Rani Phul Kumari Sahiba of Sherkot we have an ideal zamindar, who will beat any one of us in clear thinking and can give a right lead. In addition we have a tried and old friend in Nawab Sir Ahmad Saeed Khan Sahib of Chhattari whose qualities of an average man in perfect balance best qualify him for leadership.

The political situation in India is drifting towards revolution and unless all the stable elements join hands on a common political platform, the forward tendencies of the Congress Forward Bloc cannot be checked. The landholders, the Liberals, the Independents, the capitalists and other progressive forces of the country can easily unite into one single party fighting their political battles for the political and economic growth of the country through peaceful means. An insistence on the maintenance of friendly relations with Britain would seem necessary as 'in spite of its many dark pages the political connection finds its best credential in its own history'. With a hostile Japan in the east and a flinty and grabbing Germany in the west, India cannot afford to cut herself off from England. I am no apologist of the British Government and while I emphasise the continuance of political connexions with them, I also emphasise the great necessity of improving them. Some progress has been made in this direction but much still remains to be done and it should be the proud ambition of all of us to organize ourselves and work for the attainment of Dominion Status so that in the new order of things we may share political power with the masses.

Our immediate need is to capture political power by capturing the confidence of the tenantry. This cannot be done by lip service. An average Indian cultivator, once said Lord Hailey, may not have remarkable political education, but he is a man of great common sense. If he is called upon to give his support to any one set of people he will choose those who can prove that they have done for him something in the past and are likely to be able to do more in the future. What he wants is proof that the people who approach him are not merely interested in getting his support but have actually bestirred themselves to help him. The most effective propagandist is one who has proved himself to be a friend of the cultivator—the distribution of good seed is a better argument than the finest speeches—one drinking water pump is better publicity than a thousand pamphlets. If we keep these things in mind and make some sacrifices for the tenantry, I hope we will be able to win them to our side.

I close this humble address with humble apologies for its many shortcomings. My critics should not very kindly forget that I am not a very educated member of the landowning class and have never claimed mature judgment. In my own little way I am always ready to do my bit for the class to which I belong, as also for the country in which I live.

Second Day—Benares—2nd July 1939

#### NAWAB YUSUF'S SPEECH

Speeches expressing strong condemnation of the policy of the present Congress Government of the United Provinces were delivered on the second day, the 2nd July. Nawab Sir Muhammad Yusuf, delivering a speech in Urdu, said that the policy of the Congress Government was similar to that of the Government of Germany and Italy and the minorities had no voice and no rights during the regime of the present Congress Government. By democracy the present Government meant socialism and communism. The Nawab could not understand why the

people, who wore Indian cloth, had Russian principles and ideals of their lives. He thought that all could not be equal. That was against nature. The Nawab added that money would not rain through the destruction of the zamindari. It were only the zamindars who were in good condition but measures were being adopted for their destruction also. The economic condition of the people would not improve by putting an end to capitalism and the zamindari.

'Our principles of life,' declared Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, 'are truth, love, sacrifice and contentment.' Contentment was essential, pointed out the Nawab, as one should not be discontented in not having the wealth of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The Nawab said they could co-operate only with such Government which could improve the economic condition of the country and of the general people. He felt that the economic condition of all classes of people was worsening and the present Government proved a failure in maintaining law and order. The Nawab in the end appealed to the zamindars to organize for the protection of their rights.

#### RAJA MAHESHWAR DAYAL'S SPEECH

*Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth*, speaking next in Hindu, expressed the opinion that improper methods were adopted to get support for the Tenancy Bill in the Upper Chamber. He said that the zamindars had no quarrel with the Kisans and they wanted improvement in the condition of the Kisans, but he thought that the present Tenancy Bill would do no good to them and prove ruinous to the zamindars, and litigation would increase. The Raja pointed out that several Bills aimed at the ruin of zamindars were ready. He said that the Congressmen were not fighting against the British Government. The Congress Government were not doing anything which might be detrimental to the interests of Englishmen. The boycott of British goods had stopped and Lancashire was flourishing. Why should the British Government, or the Viceroy, or the Governor interfere with the administration of the Congress Government? The Englishmen had come to India for trade and their trade was going on well. Why should the British Government, or the Viceroy, or the Governor fight for the Zamindars? They had no consideration for the services of the zamindars during the last European war. The question before the zamindars was as to what they should do in future. Should they help, or should they not? They would have to be with the country. He appealed to the zamindars to organize, and if their demands were not conceded they should refuse to pay revenue.

#### RAJA OF TIRWA'S SPEECH

*Raja Durga Narayan Singh* of Tirwa also made a speech expressing the opinion that the Tenancy Bill would do no good to the kisans and be ruinous to the zamindars. He said that the Congress Government had already presented a scene of Jallianwalla Bagh at Benares where a 72-hour curfew order was promulgated during the communal tension and now the Rowlatt Act remained. The Raja of Tirwa appealed for strengthening the zamindar organization.

#### RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were passed by the Conference on the 2nd July:—

The conference places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the sad demise of his Highness the Maharaja Sir Aditya Narain Singh of Benares, and Rai Bahadur Vidya Nath Das and conveys its genuine sympathy to the members of the bereaved families.

#### POLITICAL PARTY

The conference of the zamindars of the Agra Province resolves that in order to save the province from impending chaotic conditions and to safeguard and protect the right of private property a political party should be organized which should be open to all organizations having similar views, with a network of branches throughout these provinces and with a band of selfless and devoted workers, its own organ of publicity and sufficient funds at its disposal for the purpose of immediate translation of our programme into action.

Resolved further that a committee with powers to elect others should be appointed to draft a constitution for the proposed party at the earliest and place it before the executive of the British Indian Association, Lucknow, and the Agra Province Zamindars' Association, Allahabad. Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth of Kotra will be the convener of the committee and the following will constitute the committee: Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Kt., Rani Pritam Kunwar, Bani Prasad Kumar, Nawab Sir Mohammad Ahmed Sa'id Khan of Chhatari, Raja Maheshwar

Dayal Seth, R. B. Kunwar Gur Narain, Sir O. Y. Chintamani, Mr. Rajnath Kunzru, Rai Govind Chandra, Mr. Anand Prasad Agarwal, Kunwar Priyanand Prasad Singh, Major Raja Durga Narain Singh, Mr. Mangla Prasad Singh, R. B. Rai Indra Narain, Shri Sadayatan Pande, Raja of Tamkohl and Raja of Jaunpur.

The following resolutions were passed by the Conference on the 3rd. July :—

Resolved that the conference records its fullest confidence in the Zamindar representatives who are carrying on negotiations with the United Provinces Government on the Tenancy Bill.

Resolved that the conference appeals to all the zamindars to unite and organize themselves in every village and tahsil of the province on the lines of the organization of the Agra Province Zamindar's Association, Allahabad, to counteract false party propaganda carried on against them as their very existence will be in jeopardy.

Resolved that in case the compromise talks now going on between the Government and the zamindar representatives fail, the conference calls upon all the zamindar members of the Legislative Council to vote for the reference of the Tenancy Bill to a select committee with a view to remove the glaring defects in the Bill.

Resolved that the conference views with alarm and great dissatisfaction the present state of lawlessness prevailing in these provinces, resulting in murders and feels that the life and property of the zamindars are no more secure. It, therefore, greatly deprecates the callous attitude adopted by the Government irrespective of any consideration for the maintenance of law and order in these provinces.

#### COERCIVE MEASURES

Resolved that the conference greatly deprecates the tyrannical attitude of the district revenue authorities in the collection of revenue by taking recourse to all coercive measures such as the issue of warrants of arrest and specially putting zamindars in the lock-up and auctioning their agricultural implements and cattle, contrary to the assurances given by the Government in the Legislative Assembly.

The conference strongly protests against the attachment of the zamindars' estates by the Government to realise the revenue in view of the abnormal agrarian trouble created and fomented by some of the irresponsible persons against the Congress and in view of the failure of the Government to check such mischievous propaganda. The conference of the zamindars of the Agra province strongly protests against the postponement of the collection arrears of rent in these provinces, both decreed and undecreed, and the reported move of the Government to wipe them off entirely in complete disregard of the facts that the landlords have paid Government revenue on these amounts. Further they have spent a huge amount out of their pockets in obtaining decrees from competent revenue courts, and also irrespective of the individual paying capacity of the tenant or his habit of default. Such a decision, if made, would set at naught all the principles of equity, justice and fairplay. The conference expects the Government to show as much sympathy with the condition and claims of the zamindars as with the tenants. The conference is further of opinion that while giving generous concession to the tenants, the Government should compensate the Zamindars for the expenses already incurred by them either in the shape of payment of the Government revenue or of obtaining their rent decrees.

#### AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION LEAGUE

The conference resolves that the Agriculturist Protection League of Lucknow which has already received wide support in the province should be further strengthened to combat the pernicious propaganda of party politics and such other activities as lead to class antagonism and to work in consonance with the policy of the British Indian Association of Lucknow and the Agra Province Zamindar's Association of Allahabad.



# The All India Women's Conference

## Standing Committee Reception at Sangli

A magnificent reception was given on the 29th. July 1939 in the palace-hall at Sangli to the members of the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference assembled at Sangli for their terminal session. His Highness the Raja Sahib of Sangli, high officials of the Durbar, distinguished gentlemen and ladies from the city were present.

### RANI OF SANGLI'S SPEECH

Her Highness the Rani Sahiba welcomed all the guests and then remarked that it was a red-letter day in the history of Sangli. She reviewed the working of the All-India Women's Conference during the last twelve years of its existence and then proudly referred to its achievement. It was a triumph for the Conference, she said, that where men unfortunately failed, women succeeded in presenting a united front, in regard to their place in the new constitution, in opposing the communal award, separate electorates and the reservation of seats on a communal basis. She also referred to the valuable work done by the Conference in educating public opinion in regard to the needs of women and the removal of their disabilities. She further paid a very brilliant tribute to Rani Rajwade—the President of the Conference for her able and rich guidance and sincere and earnest efforts in the cause of women and the Conference.

### RANI RAJWADE'S SPEECH

In reply to the reception *Rani Rajwade*, the President of the All-India Women's Conference thanked for the splendid and loving reception given to them by their Highnesses of Sangli and then narrated how the All-India Women's Conference is widening its scope from the merely educational conference to question of women, social, economic and even political. She observed if the progress was slow, it was partly due to men's apathy towards their problem. She was hopeful about the solution of their problems with Congress Governments in the eight provinces of India. She also referred to the glorious achievement of the Conference in presenting a united front with regard to the rejection of communal award and having placed a demand for joint electorates. She hoped that they would be able to do more good to the women of India by its sounder and progressive work in the days to come.

The deliberations of the committee continued for two days more. About twenty five members of the Standing Committee and about twenty members of the various sub-committees were present in Sangli for the terminal meeting.

## The Agra Provincial Women's Conference

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Agra Provincial Women's Conference was held at Cawnpore on the 15th. & 16th. October 1939. The presidential address was delivered by Mrs. *Pijai Lakshmi Pandit*. In the course of her address Mrs. Pandit said :

'It gives me a great pleasure to preside over your deliberations, and I am grateful to you for having given me this opportunity. I have been to Cawnpore on many occasions and in a number of different capacities, but this is the first time that the women of Cawnpore have desired my presence, and it is, therefore, an occasion of happiness for me.

'This conference has adopted a novel method of procedure, and instead of beginning with the president's speech, the first day was devoted to resolutions, while the speech of the president now comes to wind up the proceedings. I am, therefore, in a position to sum up, as it were, the work we have done and the thoughts that have passed through our minds.

'I have been both surprised and pleased to see the interest shown in the resolutions before the house. So often resolutions at a women's conference evoke no response and remain a dead letter after they have been passed, but the alertness and interest of the present members fills me with hope for the future. I shall have Cawnpore to thank that the women of this city are alive to their responsibilities.

'It seems hardly necessary, after the speeches that have been delivered since yesterday, for me to say very much. Many questions have been discussed and problems specially affecting women have not been forgotten, but we meet today under a shadow, the darkness of which does not perhaps engulf us at the present moment, but the fringe of which has already touched our country. I would, therefore, like to draw your attention to the great tragedy, which is being enacted upon the European stage, the ultimate result of which will affect our future progress and prosperity.

'We are many thousand miles away from the war; few of us have friends or relatives in the danger zone, yet in these days, how is it possible to isolate ourselves and remain unaffected? Distance having been eliminated, all the countries of the world are closely linked together, and what affects one has repercussions on the other. We cannot afford to say we are not interested merely because India is not in the war zone. During the last few years we have watched with increasing dismay the triumph of might over right. One after the other, nations have been suppressed and destroyed, and their peoples rendered homeless. Only a few days ago we have seen the anguish of Poland. Crushed and bleeding she lies beneath the heel of the conqueror, but through the darkness that engulfs her the indomitable spirit of the Polish people shines forth. The magnificent courage they have shown cannot be in vain, and Poland will live even though the Polish people die. So let us send across the seas a message of sympathy and hope to this sorely tried country in her hour of sorrow. The war that is being fought in Europe today is a fight between two mighty forces for world domination, and the methods of modern warfare are horrible and unworthy of nations that claim to be civilized. It is, therefore, the duty of the women of India to raise their protest against this barbarous method of settling of international disputes. India has always given the message of peace and healing to the world. It has been her special contribution towards civilization, and now when the world stands on the brink of chaos, India must act and her daughters must unite and raise their voices against the aggression and brutality that are taking their toll of human life.

'This is no time to dream of victories. The world has travelled far since the days when a victory brought honour to the victor. Today wars are not won through deeds of prowess. Inhuman and barbaric methods are employed, and human beings are destroyed with a callousness that is incredible. Each war leads to another, and each imposed peace creates bitterness and hatred degrading both the victor and the vanquished. Let us, women, say with a united and determined voice that reason and justice must reign and human beings must give up the methods of the beasts in settling their disputes. We want peace—not a peace that is patched up to suit the exigencies of the hour, but one that is voluntary, just and permanent; a peace which gives each that which belongs to him for only then will that progress be possible which will lead to a world united and free.

#### RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions passed by the conference related to various matters. The first resolution moved by Mrs. *Purnima Banerjee* of Allahabad related to international unity. It urged upon the people of India and women in particular to work with fixed determination towards building a new world where the horrors of war should be absent. The resolution reaffirmed faith in non-violence and Gandhian method for settling international problems as an effective substitute for bloodshed and murder. The conference also pledged itself to the great task of intelligently applying it to the buildings of a new India, thereby laying the foundation of a lasting peace.

The conference also urged upon the women of India to unite and raise their voice against communalism. It felt that a good deal of corruption prevailed in local bodies and resolved that such persons should be elected to them as had a spirit of service and sacrifice in them.

It was resolved that women should make unceasing efforts to popularize the use of Swadeshi articles.

The conference sought amendments in the existing law with a view to prevent polygamy. It drew the attention of the Government to the need of including such arrangements in their rural uplift programme as would make it possible for women in villages to earn something for them and suggested the appointment of women organisers for the purpose.

Mrs. *E. C. Srinivasa*, chairwoman of the reception committee, thanked the president of the conference and the women delegates who had come.

## The Calcutta Women's Conference

### THE WELCOME ADDRESS

The aims and ideals of the All-India Women's Conference and the important part it plays in moulding public opinion in respect of many subjects which concern the country's well-being, were stressed by *Begum Hamid Ali*, in her presidential address at the annual conference of the Calcutta Constituency of that body at the Y. W. C. A. Hall, Calcutta, on the 25th. November 1939.

The Conference was well-attended, including delegates from the mofussil and many well-known social and educational workers of Calcutta.

The proceedings opened with welcome addresses by Dowager Maharani *Sucharn Devi* of Mayurbhanj and Mrs. *Indira Devi*, the President of the Calcutta constituency. The Maharani, in her address, referred to Begum Hamid Ali's services in the cause of women and said that it was a great honour to the women of Bengal to have her among them. The fact that she had come all the way from Bombay to preside over the conference showed that she was one with them in sympathy and interest. It also proved the bond of union that existed between the Moslem and Hindu women of India.

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*Begum Hamid Ali* in her presidential address, said:—

"The All India Women's Conference has established for itself an important position throughout the country. We are proud that we have been taking a leading part in all nation-building activities which have drawn the bond of womanhood closer together. To us there are no separate compartments of province or race. We are all Indian women and as such we work harmoniously for the improvement of the position of women morally, socially, in education and in law. It had helped us to broaden our minds and gradually led us to study special subjects and acquire knowledge of civic matters, which, I venture to think, was not done by such a large body of women before our Conference came into existence. It has given us a true vision of what nationhood signifies."

"Chief amongst our ideals, one, which we deliberately foster and acclaim, is our unity of purpose—our single desire of drawing all classes together, our will-power to forget the communal differences which have been deliberately raised up by those in power or those seeking power—in short men and women who are politically drunk with the wine of power, who refuse to see the good of the whole but can only see the good of a part."

"We are thinking in terms of education, economic rights, just and fair opportunities of working for the country and ultimately of guiding the destinies of our provinces and so of the country—I. e., political power."

"To reach this goal there must be no suspicion—but mutual trust and good-will. Let us, the women at least, by word, thought and deed put forth all our strength and influence and show by practical work, that these are not mere utopian dreams but can be swiftly and easily attained."

"One of the weakest links in our chain of nationhood—one which has been forged much against our will—is separate electorates. Now that it is an accomplished fact and has wrought all the evils that we foretold it would—it cannot be broken and mended anew unless both the parties, or, shall I say, all the parties, are willing to have it broken up and made anew. Our leaders must make it the business of their lives to create such an atmosphere of understanding and good-will that each side will voluntarily and with trust and friendship ask that the separation might end and voluntary and equitable partnership might begin."

"I maintain that the women must give a lead to our countrymen in this matter. They are like children squabbling about shining bits of glass which are in reality hardly worth the trouble of picking up and neglect the worthwhile things lying close at hand."

"Everything has a relative value after all—perhaps what you think is a small matter might have an accumulative force of such magnitude that it might shake the very foundation of a country as huge as ours—it might prove to be an item which help in the salvation of the country."

"It is well we realise the importance of a movement like ours—its far-reaching and dynamic effect on the customs, manners and thought of the people. We are unaccountably responsible for the weaves of the fabric which makes up India. Let us then be humbly but conscious of the power of good and evil that our small

but capable hands possess, put forth our hands in friendship to all who are willing and proud to serve India.

"Let us give friendship and love and service to those who ask for it but give even more to those who do not ask it but try to avoid us. Those are the people who are really and truly in need of thoughtful far-seeing help and understanding, and above all, of friendship." (Applause.) In conclusion, *Begum Hamid Ali* paid a tribute to the work that was being done by the Calcutta Constituency.

#### THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

*Mrs. Basanti Chakravarti*, the Hon. Secretary, gave an account of the activities of the Calcutta constituency during the past year.

She particularly dwelt on the hostel for College girls started by the Calcutta branch at 19, Bepin Pal Road, Ballygunge. There were only six boarders at the hostel which was being run at a deficit of Rs. 250 per month. The Calcutta University had sanctioned a monthly grant of Rs. 150 from July last and the Calcutta Constituency had made a donation of Rs. 500 and also given a loan of a like amount, which had enabled the Committee to carry on hitherto. Nevertheless, more funds were wanted to place the finances of the hostel on a stable basis.

The Bal Mandir, the clinic run by the Calcutta Constituency, was going on smoothly. *Miss Mary Dingman* of the Peace and Disarmament League visited the institution in January last and was pleased with the work done there. This institution also required more money as the grant which the Calcutta Corporation used to make had been reduced.

Concluding, *Mrs. Chakravarti* said:—This year, instead of taking up new activities, we have tried to concentrate on the work already undertaken. We realize that much remains to be done. But we are glad to be able to say that at this crucial time when factions and communalism are rending the country, we the women of India, have been working shoulder to shoulder for our common cause and our common ideal."

#### Resolutions—2nd. Day—Calcutta—26th. November 1939

The following resolutions were passed by the Conference on the next day, the 26th. November 1939:—

##### HOSTEL FOR COLLEGE GIRLS

Moving the resolution on hostels for college girls, *Begum Hamida Momin* said that this was a very important matter which concerned the welfare of their girls. It was true that the Calcutta University had a regulation bearing on this subject, but nevertheless, they found in practice that there were more unlicensed hostels for college girls in Calcutta than licensed ones.

There was no gainsaying the fact that the conditions prevailing in many of these hostels were extremely unsatisfactory and it was incumbent upon them to see that the present state of things was so altered that the hostels might grow up into healthy abodes for girls. One of the ways was to urge upon the Calcutta University the necessity for strict observance of the regulation on the matter and compel the colleges to comply with its provisions. Any violation of it should entail the disallowance of the students of such a college from appearing at the ensuing university examination. It was the duty of parents also to exercise scrutiny and judgment in selecting hostels for their girls.

The resolution, which was seconded and supported respectively by *Mrs. S. C. Dutt* and *Mrs. N. C. Sen* read:

"The Conference welcomes the decision of the Calcutta University to appoint an Inspector for Girls' Hostels in Calcutta and urges that an experienced and able woman be appointed to the post.

"The Conference reiterates the views regarding the residence of college girls in Calcutta, passed at its constituent Conference last year and urges the Calcutta University to enforce strict observance of its Regulation I, Chapter XXIV by every College and in cases of violation to disallow the students to appear at the ensuing examination."

##### CONTROL OF WIDOWS' HOMES

The resolution relating to orphanages, widows' homes etc., was moved by *Mrs. Sahabuddin, M. L. A.* She said that some of these institutions were no doubt genuine but the great majority of them were bogus. These were usually started by persons of questionable integrity, who were set to make profits and also for other questionable purposes. Public opinion in this Province did not seem

to be sufficiently alert about the evil effect of this state of things. Mrs. Uma Nehru had introduced a Bill on this subject, which contained some very salutary provisions which, if adopted, would go a long way in checking some of the evils connected with these institutions. These provided that for starting such institutions, a licence from the District Magistrate must be obtained, the officer had also to satisfy himself that a society had been formed to look after the institution, that it had been registered, that it had sufficient funds, that the members of the society were respectable citizens, that the home was located in a healthy and respectable quarter and also that there was official inspection of the home and the society. These were very necessary provisions the observance of which would be conducive to the efficiency of these institutions, while at the same time rendering them free from suspicion of every kind. Mrs. Shahabuddin added that she intended to give notice of a Bill in the Bengal Assembly more or less on the same lines, of course, keeping in view, the conditions and circumstances in Bengal.

Mrs. Hemlata Mitter endorsed the remarks of the previous speaker. She described the valuable work being done in connexion with Govinda Kumar Home and also with the Rescue Home of the All Bengal Women's Union. She thought that no right-minded person could object to necessary legislation being enacted to effect a reform of this character.

Supporting the resolution, Mrs. Kent said that she had found some very sad and distressing circumstances in a number of these institutions. These institutions were often situated in unhealthy surroundings and some of them were always overcrowded. Some of the committees connected with these institutions contained most respectable people but the difficulty was that as most of them were on the committees of a number of institutions, they could not give sufficient attention to any of them. Mrs. Kent added that many nurses' bureaus were undesirable places and these should be included within the scope of the Bill.

The resolution which was carried, was as follows :—

"The Conference fully supports the principle of the Bill for the control and supervision of Orphanages, Widow's Homes, Rescue Homes, and Marriage Bureaus etc., which has been introduced in the U. P. by Srimati Uma Nehru and urges that a similar Bill be introduced in Bengal and other Provincial Legislatures to put a stop to all bogus institutions."

#### SOCIAL WORKERS

Mrs. S. N. Ray moved a resolution urging the imperative necessity for making adequate provision in Bengal for trained and paid social workers. She said that they had an immense task before them and it was not possible to accomplish even a fraction of what they had undertaken without a sufficient number of workers. She referred to health, educational and social work in the villages which required a large number of trained workers.

The resolution evoked considerable discussion, a point that was made being the want of funds. Eventually it was carried, coupled with a decision to appoint a sub-committee to devise ways and means.

#### TRAFFIC IN WOMEN & CHILDREN

Mrs. S. C. Mukherji, Chairman, (Calcutta Constituency) moved a resolution urging the necessity of introducing certain amendments in the Bengal Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act (1933), with a view to preventing traffic in women and children. She said that the present legislation on the matter contained loopholes, which enabled designing people to evade its provisions.

Supporting the resolution Mrs. Stanley said that this was going to be a very tough fight because they had the whole of past evils against them. She added that for the proper working of the Act there should be some competent women officers in that department. The resolution as passed, read :—

"In view of the urgent necessity for preventing the traffic in women and children, this Conference is of opinion that the Bengal Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1933 should be amended to make it much more effective. It urges that one of the members of the Bengal Legislature should introduce the amendments suggested by the All-Bengal Women's Union and the Vigilance Association.

"This Conference further recommends—(a) That particular police officers under the guidance of a Special Deputy Commissioner of Police should be deputed to take up this work."

(b) That women police officers for vigilance and rescue work and a Woman Welfare Worker as in Madras should be appointed ;

(c) That all fines and penalties realized under the Act should be utilised by Government for the maintenance of Rescue and After Care Homes.

Similar effective measures should be introduced in all Provinces and States."

Mrs *Sudha Majumdar* moved a resolution requesting the Government of Bengal to appoint a qualified woman Inspector who would be a trained Doctor as in Bombay or at least a trained and experienced nurse to supervise the working of Bengal Maternity Benefit (Act No. IV of 1939), as well as to advise women workers generally. Mrs. Majumdar said that according to the Act maternity benefit meant four weeks' wages before and four weeks' wages after child-birth. It would not be surprising for some employers to try create difficulties. It was, therefore, necessary that a competent woman Inspector should be appointed to look after the interests of the women workers concerned.

Mrs. *Soudamini Mehta* seconded the resolution.

Supporting the resolution, Mrs. *Hasina Murshad* said that it was up to them who were more fortunately placed, to voice the needs and grievances of the poor and ignorant workers. The resolution was carried.

Mrs. *S. C. Mukherjee* proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair, which brought the proceedings to a close.

## The Madras Women's Conference

### DR. MARIA MONTESSORI'S SPEECH

The fourteenth Madras Constituent Conference of the All-India Women's was held on the 9th. December 1939 at the Assembly Hall, Queen Mary's College, Madras, Mrs. *Rukmini Lakshminipathi* presiding. Dr. *Maria Montessori* opened the Conference. There was a large gathering of women.

Dr. *Muthulakshmi Reddi* extended a hearty welcome to Dr. *Maria Montessori* and requested her to open the Conference.

Dr. *Montessori*, after thanking the Conference for giving her an opportunity to meet them, said that the honour conferred on her was a proof that women all over the world were united in one common ideal. She was proud to know that the women of India had joined together in the struggle to better the social conditions in the country. As one of the pioneers of the Feminist Movement for the emancipation of women in Europe, she knew how difficult it was to get women to take their proper place in the national struggle. There was no doubt that when once women came out, they brought with them great enthusiasm and the causes they took up would always be achieved. Women took with them into their work the sacred sentiments of love and pity. The urgent need of the hour was the great moral uplift movement among mankind.

Women, Dr. *Montessori* went on, had shown that they were in no way inferior to men in intellect and were capable of occupying any position. They had also shown themselves capable of organisation and to carrying forward any work to success. Dr. *Montessori* went on to say that for bringing about a better world, it was not enough that women should be free. The emancipation of women should be a prelude to the emancipation of children. From her experience she had learnt that if children were put in condition of freedom, they showed great desire to know a great deal as well as to do a great deal. They also developed a sense of discipline and the virtue of organisation. Freedom and discipline were the two sides of a coin. She was, therefore, of opinion that any scheme of social work should include freedom for children. Children should not only be given facilities to acquire knowledge but also to develop in a neutral way. She was glad that in the resolutions before the Conference emphasis had been placed on child education. She hoped to see in future not only freed Women going forth into the world but also the free Child in her arms. Only women could understand the souls and the needs of children. Dr. *Montessori* wished the Conference all success.

### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mrs. *Rukmini Lakshminipathi*, in the course of her address, said that they had met under the shadow of a great war. It seemed as if the progress of mankind could no longer be guaranteed and that neither peace nor goodwill would be restored on earth. They should all pray that peace would soon return in order that liberty and free institutions might thrive. In the struggle against war

and dictatorships, in the great work of ensuring peace on earth, based on national and social freedom, let the women of India pledge to give their support, while, at the same time, emphatically protesting against all manner of wars.

Proceeding, the President said that as a result of the war, they were faced with two serious and distressing situations, one being its effect on their economic resources and the other, the political impasse. It was stated by Britain that the present war was being waged in the name of democracy and for the preservation of the integrity and independence of free nations. So long as there was domination and exploitation of nation by nation, there could be no enduring peace.

At the time, Mrs. Lakshmiipathi proceeded, when the need for national solidarity was more pressingly felt than hitherto, it was regrettable that they should be divided by communal differences and by communal squabbles and riots. A common spirit and a common goal must actuate them. For the common good of the country, they must behave democratically and co-operatively. She would, therefore, appeal to the leaders of the different communities and political parties to come to an amicable and speedy settlement of their differences so that communal disharmony might not be adduced as an argument against their political freedom. Let the Muslim, Hindu, Christian and other women give a lead in this solution of the communal problem.

Mrs. Lakshmiipathi went on to say that the two aspects of their educational system which called for their attention were the enforcement of the Elementary Education Act and adult education. If the women in the land were to behave democratically and co-operatively the first requisite was education. The first step towards the realisation of communal unity was the extension of compulsory elementary education for Muslim girls. She hoped that both Government and the Madras Corporation would take the necessary action in the matter. The question of educating the child was important. She said that in Japan she found that every primary school had a kindergarten section attached to it and all children below the age of six necessarily attended the classes therein, before they moved into a primary school. Local bodies in India such as union panchayats, municipalities and district boards might as well make an experiment in the Nursery School Project in their respective areas. They should also support private agencies which took up this work.

Mrs. Lakshmiipathi next appealed to the delegates to support the social Bills now on the legislative anvil, particularly those pertaining to the property rights of Hindu women and the rights of Muslim women. The Madras Constituent Conference of Women might be well advised to take the message of these social Bills right into the midst of the masses; for the passing of these into law would surely and certainly raise the status of the women in social economy.

In conclusion, the President appealed to those present to promote Swadeshi in order to help in the economic regeneration of the country.

#### RESOLUTIONS—WORLD PEACE

Miss A. Thomas moved a resolution on world peace, which urged all women of India to realise the urgent need there was at the present moment to organise themselves in First Aid and Home Nursing. It called upon women to set their face against all violence and especially against any appeal to arms as a means of solving international differences. The resolution expressed the firm belief that only an appeal to non-violent methods would bring about righteous peace in the world. The resolution next appealed to men of science not to assist in the manufacture of destructive armaments or any weapons of warfare.

Miss Simon seconded that resolution, which was adopted unanimously.

#### NURSERY SCHOOLS

Mrs. Armstrong moved: "The Conference recognises the fundamental importance of Nursery Schools in laying the foundations for the building of character in the future citizenship of the country."

Mrs. Wilson seconded the resolution, which was also unanimously accepted.

#### COMMUNAL AMITY

Srimathi Ambajournal moved: "This Conference, while deeply deploring the communal disturbances, which are becoming increasingly common, earnestly appeals to the leaders of all political parties and communities, particularly the Congress and the Muslim League, to come to a speedy and amicable settlement of their differences with a view to end the present impasse. This Conference further emphasises the fact that the women of India have always stood together and have been

working unitedly irrespective of caste, creed or race for national solidarity and the common good of the country."

Srimathi Ambujammal said that if only women would exert their influence in getting rid of the these differences, they could easily ensure communal harmony. Mrs. Rahmuthunissa Begum, seconding the resolution, said that Hindus and Muslims should be considered as the two eyes of the nation and each community should work in a spirit of service to God and man, which was the fundamental teaching of both Hinduism and Islam. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi supported the resolution which was then carried unanimously.

Mrs. Yakub Hasan moved a resolution urging the Government and the Corporation of Madras to lose no time in extending compulsory primary education to Muslim girls. Mrs. Muhammad Ibrahim and Miss Fatima Sayed supported the resolution which was carried.

#### LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Moved by Mrs. Savithri Rajan and seconded by Miss Vilasini Shenoy, the Conference stressed the importance of continued effort towards adult education and urged women's associations and private bodies to organise classes and centres for the promotion of literacy and general educational classes for illiterate men and women and requested the municipal and local bodies to help such enterprises as showed good results.

On the motion of Mrs. Rahmuthunissa Begum, seconded and supported by Miss Muhamed Ali and Miss Zahara Begum, the Conference adopted a resolution requesting the Corporation of Madras and the Government to take a census of children of school-going age and enforce the Elementary Education Act.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi next moved: "This Conference gives its support to Srimathi Ammana Raja's Bill in the local Legislative Assembly regarding dedication of Devadasis to temples, the Anti-Dowry Bill of Mr. Dubaye in the Central Assembly, Mr. Karmi's Bill relating to Muslim Women's rights and Mr. Dalha's Bill to further amend the Hindu Women's Rights to Properties Act of 1937 and all Bills relating to rights of women."

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi made a fervent plea for the removal of all disabilities attaching to women regarding inheritance.

Mrs. Kamaladevi Arya seconded the resolution which was adopted unanimously.

#### CHILDREN'S WELFARE

Mrs. Chibwala, in a resolution, urged the Government to amend the Madras Children's Act so as to include offences against children by adults and to protect children further by penalising begging by children and child labour in the Province. Mrs. Theodore, seconding the resolution, said that the Act was defective in many respects. Cases of exploitation of children by adults for all purposes had been brought to her notice and it was the duty of Government to so amend the Act as include such offences. The resolution was then passed.

Srimathi Visalakshi Ammal moved that the Corporation of Madras be requested to give immediate effect to the recommendations of the House Committee regarding improvement of slums in the City. She said that the experience at Gokulam and some other slums, where most of the recommendations of the Housing committee regarding sanitation and planned dwellings had been enforced, showed that with education to remove the slum mentality, much could be achieved.

Miss Vilasini Shenoy seconded the resolution which was passed unanimously.

#### BEGGAR PROBLEM

Moved from the chair, the Conference adopted resolutions requesting the Corporation of Madras to establish a home for the segregation of diseased beggars and particularly lepers, urging the Government to pass immediate legislation for the commitment of beggars to beggar homes and reiterating the necessity to encourage indigenous industries. The Conference then terminated.

### The Andhra Provincial Women's Conference

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Andhra Provincial Women's Conference was held at Oudhpar on the 14th, December 1939 under the presidency of Begum Mir Amine-ud-din who, in the course of her address, said that twelve years had gone by since she worked with a committee.



of enthusiastic women of the Godavari District and succeeded in holding the first Godavari District Women's Conference at Rajahmundry and the first Andhra Women's Conference at Cocanada. She was glad that the work of the organisation had been carried on successfully by the Andhra women whose activities in connection with the All-India Women's Conference have been more numerous than those in the other parts of the country.

Dealing with the vital changes that had occurred in the past twelve years in the status and position of Indian womanhood, Begum Mir Amiruddin observed that while the Women's Movement had been suffering retrogression in many countries of the West, which were governed by totalitarian doctrines, in India we had been having Women Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Deputy Speakers and a President of the District Board. In this connection she offered her hearty congratulations to Srimathi Ramasubbamma who was elected President of the District Board of Cuddapah. The task of handful of women, or even one woman in the midst of a crowd of men, would certainly be difficult, but the ideal of womanhood should be to better the conditions of the people and make them happier. Mrs. Radhabai Subbaroyan and Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi should serve them as examples.

"Another point to which I should like to advert is that the problem of India's womanhood cannot be solved merely by the tide of political honour rising high for a handful of women and by the amelioration of the condition of a microscopic minority. Just a few swallows do not make a summer. The future of India's womanhood is bound up with those of the 97 per cent of the women of the land, who are steeped in dire ignorance, slaves to archaic conventions and bound down by age-long prejudices. If the Conference is to fulfil its real role, namely, the elevation of India's womanhood, its activities must be broad-based on the satisfaction of the needs of the mass of Indian women. The message of this Conference is that of the awakening of womanhood. It is not enough that this message should reach the urban intelligentsia. It is much more important that it should permeate to the ignorant women of the villages. We have to make intimate contacts with the women of the rural areas, with those who toil in the factories and labour in the fields and address ourselves to the task of ameliorating their unhappy condition."

Begum Amiruddin observed that the problems with which we had to deal fell under two heads : education and social reform : Eradication of illiteracy was an urgent problem. Particularly women's education was of vital importance, because it was the condition on which ultimately the success of men's education depended, she being the mother who moulded the future race. It was regrettable that everywhere in this Presidency, it was the girls' education which suffered most, the disproportionately small sum of money that was spent on this matter was wasted owing to the stagnation that resulted from the apathy of parents and the discontinuance, absence, etc., of the pupils from further studies in the higher classes. "This reform can be effected only when the parents are made to evince real interest in the education of their girls and when early marriage and other social factors do not lead to the premature stoppage of their education. In order to tackle this problem, I should like to advise the formation of school-care committees for as many schools of Andhradesa as possible, particularly for the elementary schools. The work of this Committee will be to look after the interests of the pupils and to secure the co-operation of their parents in the matter of their education. The members of this Committee should visit the mothers of the children from time to time and explain to them the importance of education by personal propaganda and influence them to send their children to school regularly. The Committee should also visit those mothers that withdraw their children for no satisfactory reasons. In the battle against illiteracy, the formation of such Committees, I feel, will do much permanent good to hasten the progress of girls' education and I hope the public-spirited ladies of Andhradesa will direct their early attention to this matter."

Another requirement was the provision of facilities for girls' higher education in these parts. Consequent on the raising of the age of marriage, a keen desire for higher education was in evidence among girls. The need for a first-grade Women's College in Andhradesa must be emphasised.

Granting attention had also to be focussed on the education of Muslim girls, particularly in the Coastal Districts. Apart from the apathy of the public towards girls' education, a serious drawback to Muslim education was the paucity of suitable

and competent Muslim women teachers. In the interests of advancing their education, it was desirable to appoint Muslim Sub-Inspectresses in places where there was a fairly large Muslim population. There was the need for a Muslim Girls' High School in Andhradesa. Now that the language of each area had become the medium of instruction in all high schools, it was necessary to make special provisions for Muslim girls, whose language was Urdu, so as to enable them to prosecute their secondary education. Begum Amiruddin felt glad that the importance of Adult Education was realised now. But she urged that provision must be made to educate adult women in as large numbers as men.

In the field of social reforms Begum Amiruddin advocated the abolition of polygamy, which had been engaging the attention of women for some time past. She exhorted the audience to give their full support to Mrs. Radhabai Subbaroyan in her efforts in this direction. Marriage of old men to young girls and the early marriage of girls were other evils which had to be eradicated from the Hindu society. She also condemned the dowry system, "that cruel, degrading custom which ruins families that have daughters and made the poor look upon the birth of a girl as a misfortune". In order to get rid of this custom, two steps were necessary; one to adopt a definite programme of propaganda to be carried out unflinchingly until public opinion was sufficiently organised against the custom; the other, to give girls such education as would render them economically independent and befit them to pursue a profession, if need be.

"In regard to Muslim marriages, a question that demands urgent attention is the curtailment of the power of men in the matter of pronouncing divorce. As the law stands at present, a man has the arbitrary power of divorcing his wife. In return, the wife has no right to object but obeys and accepts the misfortune with patience and in silence. It is necessary to invoke the aid of legislation to save the woman from the untold misery and unhappiness in which she sometimes finds herself by reason of this power possessed by her partner."

With regard to Hindu women, the removal of the legal obstacles that detracted from their status and hampered the growth of their personality was of vital importance. The key to the improvement of their status was their securing economic independence. The time had arrived when Hindu women should be given full rights of disposal over property that belonged to them as every owner possessed. It was a pity that the Committee that had been appointed by the Government to examine the legal position of Hindu women should be dealing merely with the question of their residence and maintenance and not directing its attention to more important matters like succession and the right to property. We should request the authorities to extend the scope of investigation by this Committee so as to include all the aspects of the legal disabilities from which Hindu women were suffering. It was a matter of gratification that there were to-day a number of Bills before the Central Assembly and in the Madras Legislature for ameliorating women's condition. Women should, with one voice, accord their whole-hearted support to these measures.

The mitigation of the miseries of widows in this country was also a question that demanded attention. Widow remarriage had already been legalised in Hindu society, but the number of widows taking advantage of this legislation was still very small, for while widow remarriage was advocated on the platform, in actual practice, society was intolerant. To relieve their distress it was necessary that special widow-scholarships should be instituted so that such women may be encouraged to educate themselves and equip themselves for some profession. Special concessions should also be given to widows for serving in schools. Further, for the mitigation of their sufferings, ways and means of establishing a Widows' Home in every town must be devised. Active steps were also necessary to combat the incidence of the heavy maternal mortality in this country. Women should also not be neglectful of their civic duties. The Public Health Act was a measure of far-reaching importance in the matter of promoting the health of the nation, but unless the public, of which women constitute half the number, co-operate to render it effective, this Act would meet the fate of many other Acts and become a dead letter. I also wish to appeal to the women of Andhradesa to take an interest in the study of Hindustani. Why should not the people of South India learn another language if it is to produce harmony and unity in the land? I do not think one can lay too much stress on the value of learning Hindustani in these days, a language which in future will become the vehicle of expression at All-India Conferences. Another point that I should like to stress is the urgency of commercial

harmony in this country for which women should work. Never before was the need for national solidarity in India so great as at present, but unfortunately the horizon is darkened by the black clouds of communal discord. Happily, the Republic of womanhood is unfettered by the barriers of community or caste. We, women, stand united, even as a light-house in the midst of breakers, for we know that in unity lies the secret of success. In addition, we should become the messengers of peace and try to secure similar unity in the ranks of the men. Let us hope that the better sense of the communities will prevail and that their differences will meet with a speedy and amicable solution.

Begum Amiruddin concluded with a reference to the war and the spirit of aggression that was the cause of it, and hoped for its extermination.

## The Punjab Women's Conference

### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

"There is today from all I have noticed since my return to India a great desire to express nationalism in a blind and unthinking advocacy to the return to manners and customs of past times and to reject from our life everything that savours of Europeanization on the ground that we are denationalising ourselves. This is an attitude, I am afraid, I do not wholly sympathise with," declared *Lady Rama Rao*, presiding over the All-India Women's Conference (central Punjab branch) held at Lahore on the 9th. December 1939.

She added, 'With changing times and conditions, changes in our manners and even social institutions must come and so long as we are able to discriminate between what suits and what does not suit our life in India we can be as good nationalists as any other.' Proceeding, Lady Rama Rao exhorted the women to bring about unity in their ranks and to achieve an ideal which the menfolk had failed to do. She deplored that only a few of them could honestly forget that they were Hindus, Muslims, Punjabis or Madrasis. So long as these religious or provincial considerations crept in, it was impossible to give to the task that lay ahead the singleminded devotion that was required of them.

Referring to the question of education of women, she regretted that only two per cent were educated. A great task lay in this field yet unachieved. The work that was being done by women associations in every province in connection with the literacy campaign, therefore, deserved recognition but thousands of workers were yet needed to make any appreciable difference. Suitable education for the rural women, revival of home craft and village industries were a prime necessity. This work could be undertaken by the educated women of the towns but it needed the support and encouragement of provincial Governments.

Stressing the necessity of discipline, she said that it was a word so common in every sphere of life in the west but was lacking to a deplorable extent in India. Discipline in the home, especially with regard to the important matter of child-rearing, was very little known.

In recent years, she concluded, discussion had been centred on the important topic of marriage and divorce, family spacing and rights of inheritance. Those questions in spite of careful work and serious thought were far from being solved. She, therefore, appealed to the conference to devise ways and means by which they could speedily arrive at a unanimous opinion on all these thorny questions.

### RAJ KUMARI AMRIT KAUR'S SPEECH

Inaugurating the conference, *Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur* exhorted the women to realise their responsibility. Until they did so they would not get Swaraj. She deplored that they passed several resolutions without trying to act upon them. Proceeding, she asked the educated women to go to villages where real India was and to create an awakening among the rural women. Referring to the Hindu-Muslim unity *Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur* said that men had failed to achieve unity and now it was for the daughters of India to take up this question and complete it. She was sure that women would not fail in this matter. Concluding she pleaded the cause of Harijans.

### RESOLUTIONS

The conference then passed the following resolutions :—  
The women assembled in this conference today reiterate their abhorrence of war as expressed by women on various occasions in meetings held all over India.

As mothers they look upon all destruction of life with horror and pain. They deplore the conditions which have led to the present war in which India along with other countries finds itself involved. They consider the ostensible objective of the war, the establishment of the principle of democratic freedom and the preservation of the national integrity of all nations big or small, worthy of support.

"With this end in view they request the British Government to trust the people of India and come to a settlement with them, so that India along with other countries of the world who are not yet free may achieve the full substance of independence at the close of the war. They also call upon the Congress and the Muslim League to settle their differences so as to allow the country to go on its path of progress unhampered and appeal to women to do what lies in their power to promote communal unity.

"Lastly, they express their complete faith in non-violence which is the only means of ushering in a new era of peace and goodwill in the world and they call upon all women, in particular, Indian women, to try to realise it in their individual as well as communal lives.

## The Delhi Women's Conference

### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Discriminating adaptation of western habits of life and thought, where necessary, should not be opposed, suggested *Lady Rama Rao* in her presidential address at the annual meeting of the Delhi Women's Conference held at New Delhi on the 16th. December 1939. Owing to illness, *Lady Rama Rao* did not attend the meeting and *Lady Bajpai*, who took her place, read her address.

*Lady Rama Rao* appealed for unity and dwelt on the immensity of the task awaiting workers for women's uplift.

### RESOLUTIONS

The meeting passed a number of resolutions, one of which ran :

"While strongly re-affirming its belief in pacifism and while realising that the democratic powers engaged in the present European war are fighting to preserve the independence of nations threatened by aggression, this Conference endorses the resolutions passed by the British section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, urging their Government, firstly, 'to make clear the terms upon which it would be willing to make peace', secondly, 'to include among the terms, the recognition of equality of race, and of the rights and liberties of the individual, and respect for the integrity of small as well as great nations', and thirdly, 'as an earnest of its acceptance of these fundamental principles, to make clear its intention of bringing India into free and equal partnership in the family of nations.'"

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# India and the War Crisis

## Gandhi's Statement

On the 3rd. September 1939 England declared War on Germany, the latter having invaded Poland. In this connection Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement after his first interview with the Viceroy on September 5, 1939 :—

At Delhi, as I was entraining for Kalka, a big crowd sang in perfect good humour, to the worn-out refrain of 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai'. 'We do not want any understanding'. I had then my weekly silence. Therefore I merely smiled. And those who were standing on the footboard returned the smile with their smile, whilst they were admonishing me not to have any understanding with the Viceroy. I had also a letter from a Congress Committee giving me similar warning. Neither of these counsellors knew me. I did not need the warning to know my limitations. Apart from the Delhi demonstration and a Congress Committee's warning, it is my duty to tell the public what happened at the interview with H. E. the Viceroy.

I knew that I had no authority to speak for myself. I had no instructions whatsoever from the Working Committee in the matter. I had answered a telegraphic invitation and taken the first train I could catch. And what is more, with my irrepressible and out and out non-violence, I knew that I could not represent the national mind and I should cut a sorry figure if I tried to do so. I told His Excellency as much. Therefore there could be no question of my understanding or negotiation with me. Nor, I saw, had he sent for me to negotiate. I have returned from the Viceregal Lodge empty handed and without any understanding, open or secret. If there is to be any, it would be between the Congress and the Government.

Having, therefore, made my position vis-a-vis the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that he should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men, I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt.

And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on July 23 from Abbottabad the following letter to Herr Hitler :

"Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

"It is quite clear that you are to-day the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object, however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success?

"Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you."

How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people themselves. I must refuse to believe that Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuations of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not therefore just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?

Yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians individually and collectively have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.

## "Source of my Sympathy"

In another article in the *Harizon*, dated the 11th. September 1939, Mahatma Gandhi wrote under the above heading :—

The statement made by me just after my interview with H. E. the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic and as a statesmanlike pronouncement by another. There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint and all are from the absolute standpoint which in this instance is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value, except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Interrelation of ideas cannot be prevented.

I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter as parts of it I do not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this :

"If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English House of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of Germany ? And why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany ? Is not Hitler an answer to the ravishing of Germany by the Allied Powers during the last war ? If you were a German, had the resourcefulness of Hitler, and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation as the whole world is, you would have done what Hitler is doing. Nazism may be bad. We do not know what it really is. The literature we get is one-sided. But I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. In Hitler's place Chamberlain would not have acted otherwise. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former's disadvantage. Is England's record in India any better than Hitler's in another part of the world in similar circumstances ? Hitler is but an infant pupil of the old imperialist England and France. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgment."

No one perhaps has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have. And my desire for and power of resistance remain unabated. But there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

In the dictionary of Satyagraha there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for Satyagraha, I use the old words giving them a new meaning. A Satyagrahi loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy. As a Satyagrahi, i.e., votary of ahimsa, I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy. In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what the other Powers have done before under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It may be that his claim to appropriate the Polish Corridor is a just claim. My complaint is that he will not let the claim be examined by an independent tribunal. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it comes from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow-thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal. If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be proof that the Law of the Jungle is still a great force in human affairs. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form we have not changed the manners of the beast.

I hope it is now clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgment. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned. I invite those who accept the premises on which my sympathy is based to join me. What shade it should take is another matter. Alone I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the concrete destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the war.

## Congress Statement on War Crisis

The following statement was issued by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on September 14, 1939 in regard to the War Crisis and India. (See p. 226.)

## Lord Zetland's Statement in Lords

In the House of Lords, on the 26th. September 1939, asked by private notice by Lord Snell to make a statement on India, Lord Zetland said he gladly responded to the invitation and did so with all the more readiness in that it provides me with an opportunity for giving expression to the high appreciation of His Majesty's Government of the support, which has been accorded to them by all classes in India. From the Princes have come the most generous offers of men, money and personal service. From individuals in all parts of the country there have poured in messages of sympathy and support. His Majesty's Government have noted with special gratification the statements made by the Prime Ministers of the Punjab and Bengal pledging their aid unconditionally in the struggle upon which we have entered, and they have also observed with very real appreciation the support which the Governors have received from Ministries in all the Indian Provinces in putting into operation such measures as had been necessary to meet the abnormal circumstances resulting from the outbreak of war. Resort to force following upon a succession of breaches of faith by the German Government unparalleled surely in the history of mankind, which compelled us to take up arms, has been unequivocally condemned by all political parties in India, whose leaders have expressed their unqualified sympathy with the victims of aggression. It is indeed abundantly clear that the triumph of the principles for which the Nazi Government stands would be regarded as a calamity of the utmost magnitude by all sections of India people.

I am bound to add, however, that in the course of a statement recently issued, those who have been authorised to speak for the Indian National Congress have indicated that they would find it difficult to co-operate with Great Britain in the prosecution of the war except upon conditions affecting the political relations between the two countries. These conditions have so far been expressed in abstract terms and I am not at present prepared to comment upon them.

I can, however, assure you that the Viceroy is in close personal contact with leaders of Indian opinion, including representatives of the Congress and All-India Muslim League, who likewise, within the last few days, defined their general attitude towards war, and that he hopes to discuss with them various issues arising out of the situation. I should like to add that a tribute is due to the Viceroy himself and his colleagues in the Government for the efficiency with which their preparations for meeting the emergency have been made and for the smoothness with which such preparations have been carried into effect.

On the next day, the 27th. September 1939, replying to the debate, Lord Zetland quoted Lord Snell's remarks that it was natural, though rather ill-timed, that the leaders of the Congress "should take this opportunity of reasserting their aims towards a fuller form of self-government than they at present possess."

I quite appreciate the fact that it is natural. I know many of the leaders of the Congress movement; they are men who are animated by burning patriotism and they do, I think, sometimes lose sight, while lifting their eyes to stars of the practical difficulties which stand in the way on the ground at their feet. But while I am ready to admit that it may be natural that they should take this occasion to reemphasise their claims, I cannot help expressing the feeling that it is somewhat unfortunate that they should have chosen this time to reassert their claims. I say that for more reasons than one. I think the British people are very susceptible to a treatment which they regard as honourable and appropriate to a particular occasion. I think that they (the British) will be very much more willing, when the time comes, to listen to the claims made to them than if they are animated by a spirit of resentment at the choosing of such an occasion for taking action which may be calculated to be embarrassing to them in life and death struggle.

I am sorry for a further reason. I agree with Lord Snell when he pointed out that it was a tremendous advantage to India that there are now a tremendous number of ardent Indian nationalists who have had the advantage of experience in the actual work of administration.

It will be a calamity if such men, at this time, were to withdraw from Government in the provinces. They have shown that they are capable of dealing with problems which face them in their country and they have co-operated in an

able spirit with the Governors with whom they have been associated. I have nothing but praise for the manner in which up to now they have co-operated in carrying through measures which have been necessitated by the outbreak of the war. So I say I think that the time has been ill-chosen by the leaders of the Congress for a reiteration of their claims.

I am not for the moment, in a position to give any further information in regard to the discussions taking place between the Governor-General and the Indian leaders. The Governor-General had a long talk yesterday with Mahatma Gandhi and he is proposing to see—indeed, he may actually be engaged in discussion at this moment with—the leader of the All-India Muslim League. It is his intention to discuss matters with other leaders in the course of the next few days and we can only hope that as a result of frank and free exchange of views between the Governor-General and the leaders of political parties in India, we may find that they will co-operate with us in the task and aim of which they entirely approve. There is not the smallest doubt that from one end of India to the other there is growing an appreciation of the necessity of uprooting and destroying, once for all, the form of Government which has been responsible for bringing upon this great calamity.

#### Mahatma Gandhi on Lords' Debate

In the following statement issued on the 28th. September from Seagon, Mahatma Gandhi said :—

An advance copy of Reuter's summary of the Lords' debate on Indian affairs has been shown to me. Perhaps silence on my part at this juncture would be a distinct disservice both to India and England. I was unprepared for the old familiar flavour in the debate in the shape of drawing comparisons unflattering to the Congress. I maintain that the Congress is an all-inclusive body. Without offence to anybody it can be said of it that it is the one body that has represented for over half a century, without a rival, the vast masses of India irrespective of class or creed. It has not a single interest opposed to that of the Mussalmans or that of the people of the States. Recent years have shown unmistakably that the Congress represents beyond doubt the people of the States. It is that organization which has asked for a clear defining of the British intentions. If the British are fighting for the freedom of all, then their representatives have to state in the clearest possible terms that the freedom of India is necessarily included in the war aim. The content of such freedom can only be decided by Indians and them alone. Surely it is wrong for Lord Zetland to complain as he does, though in gentle terms, that the Congress should at this juncture, when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle, ask for a clear declaration of British intentions. I suggest that the Congress has done nothing strange or less than honourable in asking for such a declaration. Only a free India's help is of value. And the Congress has every right to know that it can go to the people and tell them that at the end of the war India's status as an independent country is as much assured as that of Great Britain. As a friend of the British I, therefore, appeal to English statesmen that they will forget the old language of imperialists and open a new chapter for all those who have been held under imperial bondage.

#### Pt. Jawaharlal on Lords' Debate

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru issued the following statement from Allahabad, dated the 28th. September :—

I have read the report of Lord Zetland's statement in the House of Lords with deep regret. I do not wish to enter into any controversy with him on this subject. The Congress Working Committee had explained the position of the Congress at length and with clarity and dignity. Lord Zetland has not followed the Working Committee's example in this respect. We had tried to consider the problem of India in the larger context of War aims and peace aims and had requested British Government to declare clearly what their aims in this War were and further give effect to such aims, in so far as it was possible in the present.

It was made perfectly clear by the Working Committee as well as by Congress leaders that we were not out to bargain or to take advantage of England's difficulty. But it was essential on our opinion, both from the point of view of India and the world, that these War aims should be clarified and people made to believe in their reality and their bona fides. It is astonishing that a request of this kind should be called inopportune and ill-timed.



The question is not of India only, but of all the world and all those who have faith in the future of humanity and who are determined to rid the world of all causes of War and human exploitation.

Therefore, the Working Committee requested the British Government not only on behalf of vast numbers of people in the world, to clarify this position and thus to bring some measure of hope in the despairing hearts of humanity. Being concerned especially and inevitably with India and the Indian people, we wanted to know how these War aims applied to India in the future and in the present.

We want to know at the same time how they apply to countries of Europe, to China, and to the various colonies. We have condemned Fascism and all its works with all our might. Lord Zetland says that it will be a calamity, if Congress Governments withdrew from the administration of various Provinces in India.

I agree, but it would be an infinite calamity for us and for others, if these Congress Governments forgot all ideals that we have proclaimed and lost public support on which they based themselves.

It would be also an infinite calamity, if the War went on with no clarification of issues and resulted not only in terrible destruction and horror, but also in perpetuation of every system which was denounced in the name of freedom and democracy. Whatever may be said about the statement of the Working Committee, no one can accuse them of vagueness. They have framed clear questions which demand answer. In this grave hour of trial for all the world, when the whole fabric of civilisation is threatened, no responsible person, whether he is an Indian or an Englishman or any one else, can ignore or set aside those vital questions. No one should talk in terms of petty bargaining when issues at stake are so mighty and overwhelming.

No one also can consider these issues in terms of twenty years ago, because the world has changed and India has changed and for any one to forget this overwhelming fact is to exhibit his total want of understanding of things as they are. That way lies peril not only for India and for England, but for the world at large.

Though the world has changed and is likely to change in the immediate future at a terrific pace, Lord Zetland still speaks in terms of yesterdays that are dead and gone. He might have delivered his speech twenty years ago.

It is too late, it is indeed impossible for any of us, whether we are in England or India, to stop the rushing torrent of change. If we are wise, we can control it to some extent, possibly divert it, into right directions.

I want to repeat with all the emphasis that I possess that we have not put forward any demand in the spirit of the market-place. It is our duty as responsible Indians to consider the freedom and prosperity of India. That is the essential function of the Congress and it can never forget that.

But we have endeavoured to view this, specially in these dynamic times, from a larger point of view, because we are convinced that no problem can be solved to-day without reference to world problems.

If it was necessary for the sake of world freedom and prosperity, I am sure, India would even forego some National advantage, for we realise that national advantage brought at that cost will not be worth having for long.

But we must be convinced of that world freedom and we must see India in the picture of world freedom. Then only will War have meaning for us and move our minds and hearts, for then we shall be struggling and suffering for a cause that is worthwhile not only for us, but for all the peoples of the world. Because we feel that large numbers of British people have the same world ideas as many of us possess in India that we have offered them our co-operation in the realization of these ideals. But if these ideals are not there, what do we fight for? Only a free and consenting India can throw her weight for ideals that are openly proclaimed and acted upon.

#### Gandhi's Message to British People

In a message to the British people through the *Manchester Guardian* on the 4th. October, Mahatma Gandhi said:

"It will be a very serious tragedy in this tragic war if Britain is found to fail in the very first test of sincerity of her professions about democracy. Do the declarations, or do they not, include the full freedom of India according to the wishes of her people? This is a very simple and elementary question asked by the Congress. The Congress has the right to ask that question. I hope that the answer will be as it is expected by the Congress and, let me say, all those who wish well by Great Britain."

## Pt. Jawharlal's Message

Pandit Jawharlal's message to the *News Chronicle* dated 7th. October :—

If this war is for democracy and self-determination and against Nazi aggression, it cannot be fought for territorial annexations, indemnities of reparations, for keeping colonial peoples in subjection and for maintaining the Imperialist system. India can take no part in defending Imperialism, but she will join in a struggle for freedom. India's resources are vast but even of greater value is her goodwill and her moral support for a worthy cause. This is no small offer that India makes for it means the ending of 100 years of hostility between India and England. Only a free and equal India can co-operate of her free will in this task. Till that vital change is made none of us have the power to make the people of India enthusiastic for a war which is not theirs.

This historic opportunity must be seized by recognising India as a free nation with the right to draw up her constitution and her charter of independence. Anything short of that will mean losing this opportunity and keeping alive the spirit of friction and hostility between India and England. The first step must therefore be a declaration of India's full freedom. This has to be followed by its application now, in so far as is possible, in order to give the people effective control of the governance of India and the prosecution of war on India's behalf. Then only is it possible to create the psychological conditions which can lead to popular support. India wants to forget the past of conflict and wants to stretch out her hand in comradeship. She must be convinced that that past is over and we are all striving for a new order not only in Europe but also in Asia and the world.

## A. I. C. C. Resolution on War

The All-India Congress Committee which met at Wardha on October 9 and 10, 1939, passed the following resolution on the war crisis. (See p. 231)

## Gandhi's Comment on the A. I. C. C. Resolution

I regard the recent resolution of the A. I. C. C. on the situation as moderate and wise. It was bound to reiterate the Congress demand for an unequivocal declaration. Its merit lies in not fixing any time limit for the declaration. It is noteworthy that the resolution was carried by a majority of three to one. It is to be hoped that the British Government will appreciate the friendly spirit in which the Congress is approaching the situation. It is to be hoped also that the Europeans of India will range themselves alongside of the Congress. But the greatest help can only come from Congressmen themselves. If they do not act on the square, no external sympathy and even help will be of any avail. I see that impatience has seized some Congressmen who want to be doing something to signify their opposition to a war which they believe to be for defending Imperialism. I suggest to them that they will be defeating the common purpose by acting in opposition to the Congress decision expressed in the only way open to a democratic organization. They had their say at the A. I. C. C. meeting. They are in honour bound to defer direct action till the Working Committee or the A. I. C. C. decides otherwise. No reliance can be placed upon an organization which is not able to exercise effective control over its members. Imagine an army whose soldiers, under the false belief that they are advancing the common cause, adopt measures in defiance of those taken by the headquarters. Such action may well spell defeat. Therefore I beseech Congressmen at this critical juncture to desist from any action that would savour of indiscipline or defiance. They should surely see that by such action they undermine Congress prestige and weaken its influence.

## Declaration of His Excellency the Viceroy

The following is the text of the Viceroy's statement issued from the New Delhi on the 17th. October 1939 :

Since the outbreak of the war and, more particularly, during the last four weeks I have been in the closest touch with the leaders of political opinion in British India and with representatives of the Princely order; and I have spared no effort to acquaint myself by personal discussion with the trend of feeling; to ascertain the views of the different sections of public opinion in this country on the great questions of the day, and in particular on this question of the basis on which and the extent to which India could best co-operate in the prosecution of the war; and to satisfy myself as to the extent to which a basis of common

agreement exists, and as to the manner in which the position, so far as it may still remain obscure, can best be clarified. Matters have now reached a point at which, in my judgment, it would be well that I should make a statement designed, in the light of the discussions which I have had during these past few weeks, to clear the position on the main questions which emerge at the present moment.

I would make a preliminary observation. I have had the advantage of a full and frank discussion with no fewer than 52 people—with Mr. Gandhi, with the President and members of the Congress Working Committee, with Mr. Jinnah and with representative members of the Muslim League organisation, with the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and with a great variety of persons prominent in the political life of British India.

As was only to be expected, conversations with representatives of so many different points of view revealed marked differences of outlook, markedly different demands, and markedly different solutions for the problems that lie before us. Again, and that too was what might have been expected at a time such as the present, reservations or demands for special protection on one side have tended to be balanced by proposals for still more marked constitutional changes on another. I would ask that these differences of view, deeply and sincerely held, I have not the least doubt, by those who have advanced them to me, should be borne in mind when we consider our present problems, for they have a very direct and obvious relevance to them.

I trust most earnestly that I shall be able to dispel certain misapprehensions which are, I am clear, widely and genuinely held, and that, even if to a degree more limited than has been urged upon me from many quarters, I may be able to clarify the position as regards our hopes and our objectives for India, and to make some little contribution to the removal of the obstacles which existing doubts on that point have caused to that full, generous, and ready co-operation which it is, I am certain, her anxiety and that of her peoples to give to-day to a good cause.

The essential matters on which a clarification of the position is beyond any question desired are:—

First, what are the objectives of His Majesty's Government in the war? To what extent are they of such a character that India with her long history and great traditions can, with a clear conscience, associate herself with them?

Second, what is the future that is contemplated in the constitutional sphere for the Indian continent? What are the intentions of His Majesty's Government? Is it possible to define those intentions more precisely and in such a manner as leave the world in no doubt as to the ultimate status envisaged for India as far as the British Common-wealth is concerned?

Third, in what way can the desire of India and of Indian public opinion for a closer association, and an effective association, with the prosecution of the war be satisfied?

Let me deal with these questions in the order in which I have stated them. Let me in the first place consider to what extent in existing conditions and at this stage in the development of the campaign in which we are engaged any positive and satisfactory answer admits of being given to the demand for a more precise definition of our objectives. In endeavouring to answer that question I do not propose to touch on the question of our objectives for India. That is a matter which I will deal with separately in answering the second question which I have mentioned above. His Majesty's Government have not themselves yet defined with any ultimate precision their detailed objectives in the prosecution of the war. It is obvious that such a definition can come only at a later stage in the campaign, and that when it does come, it cannot be a statement of the aims of any single ally. There may be many changes in the world position and in the situation that confronts us before the war comes to an end, and much must depend on the circumstances in which it does come to an end, and on the intervening course of the campaign.

The experience of all history shows in these circumstances the unwisdom and the impracticability of precise definition at so early a stage as that which we have now reached. But the fact that, for the reasons I have given, precise definition is not practicable does not mean, as I see it, that there is any real doubt, or any uncertainty, in the minds of the public, whether in India or in the United Kingdom or in any other country, as to the motives which have actuated us in entering into the war, and consequently the broad general objectives which we have before

us in the campaign which is now being waged. We are fighting to resist aggression whether directed against ourselves or others. Our general aims have been stated by the Prime Minister within the last few days as follows :—"We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves. We are not aiming only at victory, but looking beyond it to laying the foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation. We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace, but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threats." This statement, I think, clearly establishes the nature of the cause for which we are fighting, and justifies, if justification is needed, the extension by India of her moral support and her goodwill to the prosecution of that cause.

Let me turn now to the second question which has been put, to me—the question of India's future and of the lines of her constitutional development. That is a question, I am certain in the light of my conversations, which is of the greatest and most acute interest to all parties and all sections of opinion in this country. As matters stand to-day, the constitutional position of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government are governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Part III of that Act, which provides for the conferment of Provincial Autonomy on the Provinces of British India, has been implemented. For nearly two and a half years now the Provinces have been conducting their own affairs under the scheme of the Act. That they have done so, on the whole, with great success, even if now and then difficulties have arisen, no one can question. Whatever the political party in power in those Provinces, all can look with satisfaction on a distinguished record of public achievement during the last two and a half years. The experience that they have had has shown beyond any question that whatever minor problems that application of the scheme of the Act may have presented, whatever difficulties may have confronted us in the operation of the Act from time to time in the Provincial sphere, the scheme of the Act is essentially sound, and that it transfers great power and great opportunities to popularly elected Governments dependent on the support of a majority in their legislatures.

The second stage contemplated by the Act was the reconstitution of the Central Government on such a basis as to achieve the essential goal of Indian unity. The method contemplated for that purpose was the achievement of a Federation of All-India, in which the representatives of all political parties in British India would, together with the Rulers of the Indian States, form a unified Government of India as a whole. I am only too conscious of the severity of the criticisms that have been advanced from many different points of view against the Federal scheme and against the arrangements embodied in Part II of the Act. I will say to-day no more than that, having myself had so close a familiarity not only with the framing of the provisions, but with the preliminary work which has been done with a view to putting them into force, I have throughout believed that the Federal scheme in its operation would have turned out as satisfactorily as, broadly speaking, we can all of us regard the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as having turned out. I will not dilate on that subject to-day, for our work in connection with the Federal Scheme has been suspended. But in reaffirming, as I do, my belief in the essential soundness of the Federal aspects of the Act of 1935, I do so with the greater emphasis because of the evidence which the Federal provisions of the Act constitute, of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to achieve, with the minimum of delay, and on the basis which appears to represent the greatest amount of agreement between the various parties and interests affected by the unity of India, and to advance beyond a further and a most important milestone on the road to India's goal.

Such being the background against which we are working, what are the intentions and aims of His Majesty's Government in relation to India? I cannot do better in reply to that question than to refer to the statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and with their full authority, by the late Secretary of State of India in the House of Commons of February 6, 1935. That statement makes the position clear beyond a shadow of doubt. It refers to the pledge given in the Preamble of the Act of 1919, and it makes it clear that it was no part of the plan of His Majesty's Government to repeal that pledge. It confirms actually the interpretation placed in 1929 by Lord Irwin as Viceroy, again on the authority of the Government of the day, on that Preamble, that "the natural trend of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status." I need not dilate on the words of that statement. They are clear and positive. They are

enshrined in the Parliamentary record. They stand as a definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government to-day, and of their intentions to-day in this end—the future constitutional development and position of India. I would add only that the Instrument of Instructions issued to me as Governor-General by His Majesty the King-Emperor in May 1937 lays upon me as Governor-General a direction so to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me "that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our Dominions."

That is the policy and that is the position. Those are the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of common agreement which it was possible to obtain at the time when it was framed. It was based as is well known to all of us, on the common labours of British and Indian statesmen, and of representatives of British India as well as of the Indian States over a long period of years. All parties were at one stage or other closely associated with those deliberations, and I can speak from personal experience when I bear tribute to the extreme anxiety of all those of us on whom, in the Joint Select Committee, there fell the more particular responsibility for devising proposals for the consideration of Parliament, to ensure that the fullest account had been taken of all interests, of the views of all political parties, and that nothing had been left undone to ensure that the outcome of our labours reflected the greatest measure of agreement practicable in the conditions that confronted us.

Be that as it may, His Majesty's Government recognise that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future Federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State, to which I have just referred, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate. And I am authorised now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties, and interests in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable.

I have, I trust, in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great Dominions. The scheme of government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process. But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views. And I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object, as at all times in the past it has been, to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to the ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal.

Let me in that connection add that in the conversations, I have had, representatives of the minorities have urged most strongly on me the necessity of a clear assurance that full weight would be given to their views and to their interests in any modifications that may be contemplated. On that I need say no more than that over more than a decade at the three Round Table Conferences, and at the Joint Select Committee, His Majesty's Government consulted with and had the assistance or the advice of representatives of all parties and all interests in this country. It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh or to modify in any respect any important part of India's future constitution without again taking counsel with those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

That some even more extensive scheme than I have mentioned, some even more widely phrased indication of the intentions of His Majesty's Government, is desired in certain quarters in this country, I am fully aware from the conversations I have had during these last few weeks. That that is a desire held with sincerity and that those who hold it are convinced that it is in the manner in question that the future progress and development of India and the expressed intentions of His Majesty's Government... have not be fulfilled, I fully and readily accept. I would like

one word only of caution. And if I say that the situation must be faced in terms of world politics and of political realities in this country, I do so from no lack of sympathy and no lack of appreciation of the motives that weigh with the people of India and the ideals that appeal to them. But I would urge that it is essential in matters of this nature, affecting the future of tens of millions of people, affecting the relations of the great communities, affecting the Princes of India, affecting the immense commercial enterprises, whether Indian or European in this country, that the largest measure of agreement practicable should be achieved. With the best will in the world, progress must be conditioned by practical considerations. I am convinced myself, if I may say so with the utmost emphasis, that having regard to the extent of agreement which in fact exists in the constitutional field, and on this most difficult and important question of the nature of the arrangements to be made for expediting and facilitating the attainments by India of her full status, there is nothing to be gained by phrases which widely and generally expressed, contemplate a state of things which is unlikely to stand at the present point of political development the test of practical application, or to result in that unified effort by all parties and all communities in India on the basis of which alone India can hope to go forward as one and to occupy the place to which her history and her destinies entitle her. I would ask that these words of caution be not taken as indicating any lack of sympathy on the part of His Majesty's Government for the aspirations of India, or any indifference to the pace of her advance; and I would repeat that His Majesty's Government are but concerned to use their best endeavours, now as in the past, to bring about that measure of agreement and understanding between all parties and all interests in this country which is so essential a condition of progress towards India's goal.

I turn now to the arrangements to be made to secure the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war. India's contribution has already been great, great to a degree which has impressed the imagination of the world. At the head of the list I would put the contribution which India had made in spiritual, and not in material, terms,—the support of her peoples for a cause which they can regard as a good and a righteous cause. In the material field equally her contribution is already most significant and may be greater still. And in the circumstances the desire, the anxiety of public opinion in India to be associated with the conduct of the war is naturally one with which I personally have throughout felt the greatest sympathy. In the circumstances I have described, the desirability of steps to ensure that, leaders of public opinion should be in the closest touch with developments is of the first importance.

I have discussed with the utmost frankness with the leaders of the various parties who have been good enough to come to see me in connection with the constitutional position by what machinery we could best give effect to this desire. We have examined a variety of expedients, and there has been no hesitation on the part of any of us in assessing the advantages and the disadvantages presented by each of them. I do not propose to-day to examine those various alternatives in particular detail. I will only say that in the light of my conversations and of the views (by no means always in accord) of representatives of the great parties and of the Princes, I am of opinion that the right solution would be the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General would himself preside, which would be summoned at his invitation, and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

This group, for practical reasons, would inevitably be limited in size. But His Majesty's Government contemplate that it should be fully representative and in particular that its personnel should be drawn by the Governor-General from panels prepared by the various major political parties from which a selection of individuals to attend meetings of the group would be made by the Governor-General. I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders and with the Princes on this question. I have no doubt whatever that an arrangement of this nature will most materially contribute to associating the Indian States and British India with the steps which are being taken for the prosecution of the war and with the arrangements that are being made in that connection.

And I am confident, too, that in an association of this nature of representatives of all parties and all interests, there lies the germ of that fuller and broader assoc-

ation of all points of view in this country which contain in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole.

When I spoke to the Central Legislature a month ago, I made an appeal for unity. I would repeat that appeal to-day. It is my earnest hope that the explanations I have given will have contributed materially to the removal of misunderstandings. Even if on certain points I have not, to my knowledge, been able to give assurances so comprehensive as those which would, I know, have been welcomed in certain political quarters in India, I would urge insistently that this is not a moment at which to risk the splitting of the unity of India on the rock of particular phrases, and I would press that we should continue to aim at the unity of India even if differences of greater or less significance continue to exist.

We live in difficult and anxious days. Great ideals are in issue. Dangers real and imminent, face our civilization. Those dangers are as imminent in the case of India as of any other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Those ideals are as precious to India as to any country in the Empire or in the world. At this grave moment in the destinies of nations, my prayer to all parties would be not to dissociate themselves from the common effort, but to lend their co-operation and their assistance in the prosecution of the war. There could be no more decisive proof of India's fidelity to her best traditions than the full use of the opportunities afforded to her by the war for concerned endeavour. The ideals we have set before us, the objects to secure which we are engaged in the present struggle, are such as to command widespread sympathy and widespread support in India. They are in harmony with her past history and her highest traditions. It is my hope that in the grave juncture which we face, India will go forward as a united country in support of a common cause.

The following is the relevant portion of Sir Samuel Hoare's statement made in the House of Commons on February 6, 1935:

"The position of the Government is this: They stand firmly by the pledge contained in 1919 Preamble (which it is not part of their plan to repeal) and by the interpretation put by the Viceroy in 1929 on the authority of the Government of the day on that Preamble that 'the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion Status'. The declaration of 1929 was made to remove doubts which had been felt as to the meaning of the Preamble of 1919. There is, therefore, no need to enshrine in an Act words and phrases which would add nothing new to the declaration in the Preamble. In saying that we stand by our pledges, I include, of course, not only pledges given to British India and to Burma as part of British India, but also our engagements with the Indian States.

#### Lord Zetland's Statement in the of Lords

In the course of his statement in the House of Lords on the 18th. October 1939, Lord Zetland said:

It will perhaps be for the convenience of your lordships if I preface what I have to say with a brief objective account of events in India immediately preceding and following the invasion of Poland by Germany. On the outbreak of the war one thing was immediately made apparent and that was that the overwhelming feeling of the Indian people from one end of the country to the other was one of violent protest against the outrage committed by the Nazi Government against agencies of civilised existence and of deep detestation of all that the international methods associated with the name of Hitler stands for and that feeling, as I pointed out in the course of a few words, which I addressed to your lordships on September 26, found expression in spontaneous support from men and women of all creeds and classes and communities.

Yet while this was so, it was a fact that the most numerous and most powerful political party in India, the Indian National Congress, had committed itself some time earlier to a specific attitude in the event of war breaking out in which Great Britain was involved. Their attitude was further defined when early in August they took exception to certain precautionary methods taken by His Majesty's Government and the Government of India in pursuance of their obligation to secure the safety of India and as an indication of their disapproval of the action taken, they called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the forthcoming session.

The particular measure to which exception was taken was the dispatch of external defence forces from India to Egypt and Aden and Singapore. This action

was taken on the urgent advice of the highest naval and military authorities. The situation, at the time, was such that the possibility of a threat to the safety of India, both from west and from east, could not be excluded and from the military point of view it was essential that the western and eastern approaches to India should be adequately defended. It would clearly have been the height of folly to have given the world by discussion in the legislature advance notice of our military dispositions.

Nevertheless, both the Viceroy and I were anxious to take leaders of political parties in India into our confidence and our plans were, therefore, communicated to the leaders of political parties in the Assembly, included, of course, the Congress party.

So much for the precautionary measures, to which exception was subsequently taken. I now come to the outbreak of war. For a long time past, the Viceroy with my full knowledge and approval has been in close touch with the most outstanding figure on the Indian political stage—Mahatma Gandhi; and here may I pause for a moment to pay a personal tribute to Mr. Gandhi, known to and beloved by peoples of India for the readiness, which he has shown not only to interpret to us the viewpoint and aspirations of the Congress, but to endeavour to appreciate in his turn our viewpoint and difficulties with which we have had to grapple and furthermore, for the help which he has most willingly given us in our endeavours to surmount them.

This being so, it was natural that immediately on the outbreak of war the Viceroy should have invited Mr. Gandhi to take counsel with him. The invitation was promptly accepted and within forty-eight hours of the declaration of war they were in close consultation. The outcome is known, for Mr. Gandhi has himself stated publicly that, speaking in his purely personal capacity—for he was not authorised to speak for the Congress—his view was that in the struggle upon which this country had entered, India should give us unconditional support. Thereafter, the Working Committee of the Congress met at Wardha to consider the situation and they invited to their Council Room not only members of the Working Committee but others, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Subhas Bose.

It was not, however, until September 15, that the result of their deliberations was made known in the form of a comprehensive statement. Such a document, setting forth as it did the views of the most powerful political party in India, called for the most careful consideration. Your lordships may study it for yourselves, for you will find it printed as an annex to the Viceroy's statement in the White Paper and it is sufficient for my purpose at the moment to say that, broadly speaking, the effect of it was, while condemning unequivocally the action of the German Government, to make it clear before they, as a party, decide to give us their support, they would wish to be informed of our war aims and in particular, how those aims would apply to India.

Meanwhile, the Working Committee of the next most numerous and powerful political party in India—the All-India Muslim League, whose president, Mr. Jinnah had also been in consultation with the Viceroy—met to take stock of the situation and issued a statement on September 18, from which it was apparent that while Muslims, equally with the Congress, unhesitatingly condemned aggression, of which the Nazi Government had been guilty, there was between their view and that of the Congress regarding the internal political situation a substantial divergence. Here, again, I need not enter into detail, for the text of this statement also will be found in the White Paper.

The Viceroy has been at pains to acquaint himself fully with the views of these two organisations by personal discussion with their leaders. But his consultations did not stop there, for there were the Princes, who from the first have thrown their whole weight into the scale against aggression and who had been in close contact with the Viceroy through the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, and there was the National Liberal Federation of India, who, as will be seen by reference to their statement printed in the White Paper, had already made their attitude towards war plain and had offered unconditional support to Great Britain. And over and above these, there were the leaders of other communities and interests such as the Hindu Mahasabha, the Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and Parsees, to mention only some of them, who instantly made it clear that their views and interests should not be left out of account in the discussions that were in progress.

There then, you have the background of the Indian picture, what of the main features of the picture itself? They may be said to be two in number first,



the desire on the part of all communities to see the overthrow of the menace, which overshadows Europe in particular and the world in general and secondly, the desire for self-expression, which takes the form, in the domain of politics, of self-government on a democratic basis. But here there are qualifications, for there is on the part of minorities insistent demand for safeguards against consequences which, rightly or wrongly, it is feared, might result from unfettered domination of the majority.

And herein is to be found the root cause of our difficulties—difficulties which those who are not burdened with the responsibility which rests upon His Majesty's Government and the Government of India, may—and frequently do—discount, but which His Majesty's Government themselves cannot ignore. For those who confine their gaze to one part only of the picture, the problem of self-government for India may appear to be a comparatively simple one, but for those who, like His Majesty's Government have to view the picture as a whole, this is far from being the case. I shall have something to say on that aspect of the case before I resume my seat.

Meanwhile, let me say that it is in our view eminently desirable that consultations with the leaders of public opinion in India, which the Viceroy has initiated since the outbreak of war—I think he has seen more than fifty leaders—should not only be maintained, but should be provided for by some more definite machinery. One means proposed for the achievement of that object are set out by the Viceroy in his statement. Briefly stated, what we have in mind is a broadly based consultative body, whose personnel would be drawn by the Viceroy from panels of individuals nominated by various political parties and interests.

From this main body the Viceroy, who would himself preside over its deliberations, would summon members to attend particular meetings at which, according to the business to be taken into consideration, their presence was desirable. Such a body would serve as a 'liaison' between the Government and the people since it would have imparted to it views and proposals of the Government and in its turn would be in a position to give free and frank expression to its opinions on all matters laid before it. These might well include matters which, in times of war, it would be inconvenient to discuss in a more public manner.

Such a scheme would possess this further advantage; that those concerned, representing different parties, communities and interests would be in close association not only with the Viceroy but also with one another and it would be my hope that the association and collaboration in so great an enterprise as the conduct of war would tend gradually to lessen the differences and emphasise the extent of the common interest of all those taking part in it and of those whom they represent.

I should like, in conclusion, to say a few words of a more general character. Responsible self-government for India is the goal set forth by Parliament in the Preamble of the Act of 1919; and it was with the full authority of the Government of the day that my noble friend the Foreign Secretary stated ten years later that the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated—that is to say, in the Preamble of the Act of 1919—was the attainment of Dominion Status.

From that objective we never have had and have not now the smallest intention of departing. The purpose of the Act of 1935 was to provide that machinery whereby the people of India might acquire that measure of political unity, which surely is the pre-requisite to the attainment by them of their eventual goal. Much has been said in disparagement of the measure, yet it should not be forgotten, that it was the outcome of immense labour on the part of Indians and Britons alike and was based on the greatest measure of common agreement which was then obtainable.

And I would add this that even in the case of a written constitution provisions of the Statute are no more than the bony skeleton of a structure; flesh and blood, which give it life and vigour are added day by day by those engaged in working it. Within the framework practices take root and conventions grow up. The constitution becomes a living and growing organism deriving form and substance from its environment. The truth of that has been demonstrated by the two years' working of the Act in so far as it affects the provinces of British India, as I feel sure the Ministers of to-day, among whom a little more than two years ago rejected it as of little worth, will be willing to admit. I believe that similar experience of the working of the federal provisions of the Act would be attended by similar results.

But if at the end of the upheaval caused by the war, when the circumstances may well differ markedly from what they are to-day, there is a desire on the part

of those concerned for modifications of particular features of the plan, then His Majesty's Government declare now that they will in such circumstances be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications as may then seem desirable.

I say then because, in my view, it is not practicable, nor do I believe that it would be in the true interest of the people of India themselves to endeavour, while we are all labouring under the strain and stress of a life-and-death struggle to embark upon the task of immense complexity and one, moreover, which would inevitably give rise to no little controversy in India itself.

And that brings me back to what I said earlier in the course of my remarks as to the root cause of the difficulties in the domain of constitutional building in India. What we have to work for is elimination of those communal antagonisms which still militate against the political unity of India.

You cannot abolish them by merely closing your eyes to their existence. You must face them and search for means to remove their underlying forces. I believe that the menace, which now confronts all of us Englishmen, Hindus, Muslims, Princes and peoples alike, may aid us to achieve what hitherto has eluded our grasp. Can we not, standing shoulder to shoulder for a common purpose, be banded together in the comradeship of arms and learn to view in truer perspective against the background of the supreme and imminent peril—for what would it profit India if the forces of aggression and of evil emerged victorious from this war—those internal and domestic differences which have hitherto raised such formidable obstacles along the road to that goal towards which the peoples of the countries have determined to travel.

This then is my appeal to the peoples of India that in comradeship with us while presenting a united front to the forces ranged against us they strive after that agreement among themselves without which they will surely fail to achieve that unity, which is an essential of nationhood of which those with vision among her leaders have long dreamed and which must surely be the crowning achievement of long and intimate political relationship between the peoples of Great Britain and India.

*Lord Zetland replying to the debate* said that he would like to associate himself whole-heartedly with the many expressions of admiration of the Viceroy's conduct of his high office, which had fallen from so many lips. No man, said Lord Zetland, could have brought to his task greater sympathy, greater energy and to some extent, greater knowledge of the immediate problems of India, with which he had had to grapple.

Of course, there can be no going back in the constitutional field in India. We have been going steadily forward and I was little surprised when I heard Lord Sankey speak as it seemed to me in somewhat disparaging terms that we had set up as our goal in India the attainment of Dominion Status.

Surely Lord Sankey who was himself so largely concerned with the framing particularly of the Federal provisions of the Act of 1935 must realise that these things cannot be unduly hurried, that there are many interests in India, which must be taken into account and I should have thought that the Act of 1935 itself showed considerable advance along the road towards the goal, which we have set ourselves. Lord Sankey suggested that the Premiers of Provinces should be members of the group. On their merits no one would welcome more warmly than I their presence on such a body.

I cannot help thinking that Lord Sankey must have forgotten a little the geographical conditions of India. How are the Prime Ministers of these various Provinces, some of them two or three days' journey by train from Delhi, going to discharge their onerous functions, which will devolve upon them in their own Provinces, if they are to meet at Delhi as members of this Consultative Committee? I do not think, it would be a practical proposition, warmly as I would welcome it, if it were. With regard to the composition of the proposed Committee, some of you have spoken as if it were assumed that it was going to be a nominated body. Not at all. The panels are either going to be nominated or elected by political parties themselves and when I said that the Viceroy would invite from time to time members, whose names occurred on the panels, what I had in mind was the difficulty like India of always being able to secure the whole of a particular group. There might be, for example, a representative of the Congress, whose natural place of

residence was the Presidency of Madras. When such a man was in Delhi he could, of course, serve on the Committee, but if he were in Madras and the Committee were called to consider matters, it would in all probability be impossible for him to attend. That is why the suggestion is made that the panels should constitute a comparatively large body on which the Viceroy would from time to time be able to draw for discussion of a particular subject. On page nine of the White Paper, the Viceroy says: "I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders in connection with this Consultative Group."

With regard to its functions, I think perhaps the fact has been a little overlooked that the Legislative Assembly will, of course, continue to be in existence. This group is not in any sense intended to displace the Legislative Assembly, where matters can be discussed freely and openly. This is rather a group of people representing different schools of political thought in India whom the Viceroy can take into his confidence, with whom he can frankly and freely discuss matters connected with the conduct of the war and war activities and such matters that in times of war it might be inappropriate to discuss in a more public manner.

## Viceregal Pronouncement Criticised

### Mahatma Gandhi's statement

*Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement regarding the Viceroy's declaration:*

The Viceregal declaration is profoundly disappointing. It would have been better if the British Government had declined to make any declaration whatever. The long statement made by the Viceroy simply shows that the old policy of 'divide and rule' is to continue. So far as I can see, the Congress will be no party to it, nor can the India of Congress conception be a partner with Britain in her war with Herr Hitler. The Indian declaration shows clearly that there is to be no democracy for India, if Britain can prevent it. Another Round Table Conference is promised at the end of the War. Like its predecessor it is bound to fail. The Congress asked for bread and it has got a stone. What the future has in store for India, I dare not foretell. I do not blame the Viceroy or the leaders of Britain for the unfortunate result. The Congress will have to go into wilderness again before it comes strong and pure enough to reach its objective. I have no doubt that Congressmen will await the Working Committee's decision.

### Dr. Rajendra Prasad's Statement

*Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Congress President issued the following statement on the Viceroy's declaration:*

The Viceroy's announcement is disappointing to the extreme but not at all surprising. Its tragedy is that sympathy and goodwill in favour of Great Britain should have been allowed to dissipate leaving behind once again jigsaw and flotsam of suspicion and distrust and ill-feeling. The Viceroy refers to and confirms the past announcements regarding the goal of British policy in India and promises a Round Table Conference at the end of the war as preliminary to the revision of the Government of India Act of 1935. The announcement of 1929 was made immediately before the Lahore Congress which considered it to be so inadequate and unsatisfactory as to justify a change in the Congress creed fixing complete independence of India as the object of the Congress and launching a campaign of civil disobedience which lasted from 1930-34. Sir Samuel Hoare's statement was made to satisfy people who had insisted on the incorporation of the goal of Dominion Status in the Act of 1935. It was not hoped that the reiteration of those very announcements which has been rejected without reserve—although they are now made in polite and consolatory language, would satisfy any one and the Viceroy has anticipated the reception which his announcement is likely to get. We have had experience of round table conferences, their interminable discussions, their window-dressing, their representative character and above all their none too concealed attempt to take advantage of such differences and deficiencies as exist in this country, for most of which the British Government are themselves responsible.

There is another important announcement regarding the formation of a Consultative Group consisting of representatives elected by the Viceroy from amongst a panel nominated by different organisations. Its functions, as the name suggests, would be consultative. It will have no power to come to a decision and will in effect have no other function than giving moral support to the decision taken by others. There is no room now left for any one to doubt that British policy regarding

what it has always been and that all talk about democracy and resistance to aggression is not meant to apply to India.

Indeed the Prime Minister declared more than once that the war aim is protection of freedom of European countries and establishment of peace in Europe based on status quo. In a war fought for this purpose India can have no interest and victory for Britain can only imply continuance of the present condition not only for India but also for other exploited and suppressed people outside Europe. India will be false to her interest and untrue to the best interest of other suppressed nationalities if she helps imperialism to strengthen itself. It is still open to Britain to rule without her consent and even expect material help for the conduct of war, but Great Britain shall not have that spiritual support of India of which the Viceroy has spoken in such eloquent terms. The announcement has effectively destroyed the foundation for any such moral and spiritual support and war, as now appears to every one, has always been a war for strengthening of Britain's imperial position in her possessions. Much advertised high aims are crumbled into dust at the first touch of reality. I hope that Congressmen will await with patience the determination and reply of the Working Committee and conduct themselves with restraint and dignity.

#### Azad-Nehru Statement

*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru issued the following statement to the Press :*

We have read the Viceroy's statement with deep regret. If this is the final answer of the British Government to the people of India, then, there is no common ground between the two and our path diverge completely.

The whole statement is a complete repudiation of all that India stands for nationally and internationally. It is a statement which would have been out of date twenty years ago ; to-day it has absolutely no relation to reality. There is no mention in it of independence, freedom, democracy or self-determination ; no attempt even to justify the dragging of India into the war without reference to her being forced to join an advance for objectives which are not hers. These objectives appear clearly from the Viceroy's statement to be the preservation and maintenance of the British imperial and financial structure in India and abroad.

The "better international system", to which the British Premier has referred, is evidently meant to preserve and strengthen this structure. Apart from this, it relates, according to him, to the peoples of Europe and not to Asia or Africa. India continues where she is ; the colonies remain where they are ; imperialism is still meant to flourish.

All this seems to follow from the Viceroy's statement and if this is the aim of the war it is difficult to imagine that even the British Government, living as it does in an age that is past and done with, can expect any self-respecting Indian to co-operate with it.

The hand of friendship the Congress had extended to the British people in this hour of world crisis has been spurned by their Government. How far that Government represents them, it is for them to say, but we have to consider the Viceroy's statement as England's reply to India.

What our next steps should be it would be premature and improper for us to say at this stage. That is for the Working Committee to decide and the Committee is meeting for that purpose soon. The hour is a grave one and requires all our united wisdom and courage and discipline and mutual forbearance. Let us bear ourselves with dignity and restraint and hold together in the cause of India's freedom.

#### Rajagopalachariar's Statement

*Shri C. Rajagopalachariar, in a statement on the Viceroy's declaration said—* It is a deeply disappointing statement. A great and unique occasion has been simply thrown away. Instead of a new courage and a new imagination befitting the great crisis which Britain and the world are passing through, a courage and an imagination that would have found its shape in a bold step and a few simple words which would have gone straight to the heart of the Indian nation, we have sung at us a language and an attitude all too familiar and in this sense tragicomic and most unfortunate.

It is not the way of dealing with a great and ancient country and a great organisation who were eager to help, if that help were approached and could be made free and honourable. Let us hope for the sake of liberty and organisation that

greater constructive imagination and greater wisdom may mark Britain's efforts in other phases of this war, than have been shown in this affair with the Indian National Congress.

#### Mrs. Naidu's Statement

*Mrs. Sarojini Naidu in a statement on the Viceregal Pronouncement said :—*

Our internal disunity may undoubtedly be sometimes successfully exploited as a text to preach a plausible sermon against freedom of India, but in this supreme hour of international crisis it would have been an act of wisdom not to expose so clearly and cruelly the fundamental disparity between Indian ideals and British policies.

The gift of prophetic vision, which is the essence of great statesmanship is woefully lacking in the response to India's demand for an unequivocal enunciation of Britain's immediate and ultimate aims in regard to war and peace and particularly in relation to India.

Ours was a genuine, I may even say in the existing circumstances, generous offer of friendly co-operation in the common and dearly prized cause of democracy and freedom of the world. The answer leaves little hope, unless some timely miracle intervenes, that India and Britain can move forward together in fruitful comradeship rather than move apart in a spirit of conflict and bitterness. I pray that such a miracle might yet be wrought.

#### Working Committee's Statement

The Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution on the Viceregal declaration on the 22nd. October at Wardha. (See p. 236)

#### India Debate in the House of Commons

Opening the debate on India in the War in the House of Commons, on the 26th. October 1939, Mr. *Wedgwood Benn* (Labour, Manchester, Gorton) said, "My purpose is to offer some words on the White Paper and the Viceroy's statement and, in particular, to see, if by a debate, we might make some contribution to the prevention of any mischief which may follow in the conduct of the War. If we criticise the Government's policy, it must be remembered that the overriding consideration in the mind of every member is how we can contribute to the successful issue of this War. Therefore, if I say anything critical, I say it with that always in mind.

I think it is a pity that a document of this importance was issued without consultation with the Leader of the Opposition or, so far as I know, with the Leader of the Liberal Opposition either. In 1929 when the Labour Government prepared a similar statement, I myself sent it by air to Mr. Baldwin in France and discussed it with Lord Reading. I think that such a thing is desirable, because in different parties we have different angles from which we look on the Indian problem. It is desirable that we should maintain a united policy in the treatment of the Indian problem.

But there is the White Paper and there are the replies of the Congress and other Indian parties. It is a clumsy document. It has a certain Indian tinge. It is like an elephant. It is massive. It is clumsy in action, but is followed by something very insignificant.

But it has provoked two very penetrating questions from Mr. Gandhi.

The first question is 'What are your War aims?'

The second question is 'If they are to secure freedom, then are we to share in that freedom?'

Those are the two questions to be answered. Before I attempt to deal with these two matters, I would remind the House that the participation of India in the War is no small matter. The contribution of India in the last War was massive. The Princes in accordance with the traditions of their order showed them, as they are showing now, their loyalty to King-Emperor. The martial qualities of the Muslim forces has never been in doubt and remember that the Moslems can enter this War with a better heart than in the last War, because we have three great Mohammedan Powers, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey, in alliance with ourselves. The Mohammedans of India need have no fear that this War will be followed by a policy of *severance*.

Think what India did between 1914 and 1918. I find that India contributed in money over 100 millions in gifts and contributions in support of Britain and in stores, 600 millions. She put her ships at the service of the British Navy and in addition, over one million Indians went to the front. In addition, in this

material aid, we had the moral support of the greatest of all Indians, Mr. Gandhi, then as now, a true friend of this country and who is a champion of the cause for which we are now fighting.

Indians now say "We have gone into the War and we were never consulted." That is true but from the German point of view from September 9 possibly before India was the target and in justice to the Viceroy and perhaps to the other Dominions, but certainly to India, it must be said that Germany was on the march towards the East. If it had not been for Soviet Russia and the Turkish Treaty, Germany might have gone from Berlin to Vienna, from Vienna to Prague, to Warsaw and further. It had to be stopped. We in London do not want this to go on, nor do Indians in Delhi. From the Viceroy's point of view, we have to remember that he had to act very swiftly. India was in danger and he had a duty to perform in seeing that it was safeguarded. One of the minor benefits we get from the sufferings connected with the present emergency is a little growth of sympathy with the Indians themselves. That cascade of orders which come from the vote office of the House of Commons, day after day, gives us some idea of what it means to be under regulations and subject to laws in which we have no hand. You cannot walk about for fear of treading on the little ant hills of bureaucrats. India lives under this rule continuously.

But the main facts are these: "India was in danger and is in danger and morally there could not be any wider divergence than exists between the philosophy of Hitler and the philosophy of Mr. Gandhi. What is the goal of the British policy in India? It is Dominion Status. A great deal of unnecessary confusion has arisen on this matter. It is said that the definition of Dominion Status is obscure and out of date. I do not agree. The declaration of 1929 which is now accepted and confirmed by the Government itself came three years after the Imperial Conference of 1926. In that Imperial Conference, the meanings of words, 'Dominion Status' were set out by a master of clear statement—Lord Balfour."

After quoting Balfour's statement, Mr. Benn continued, "I know of no definition that would better satisfy the demands put forward by the patriots of India than the definition given in the Imperial Conference of 1926 and confirmed by the Government of 1929, by Lord Irwin and again confirmed in the White Paper. Some people say why you did not put that in the Act of 1935. What is material is what is the trend of British policy and as to that we can all speak from our personal experience. No one can have sat in this House for forty years without being deeply impressed with the changes that have taken place. I am so deeply impressed with what has happened in my own life-time that I am sure that it is best to remove those doubts which exist in Indian minds as to what our goal is.

Mr. Benn who was at times inaudible to the press gallery went on to say that there had been an advance towards freedom. He was understood to say there had sometimes been opposition by certain interests and sometimes there had been genuine caution. But in the end there had always been an acceptance of change and after that, always success and success came, then, that policy was agreed as the policy of this Commonwealth.

There had been notable instances of this in Ireland and in South Africa. Lord Asquith's Home Rule Bill for Ireland was opposed by the Conservative Party, but Dominion Status for Ireland was agreed to by their leaders in the Treaty of 1922. On that basis, Eire stood today by her own free will in a position of neutrality without any voice raised in criticism.

He did not know what more freedom could be enjoyed than that, but the case of South Africa was even more striking. There was the Boer War, "a costly and foolish endeavour opposed by everybody of good sense".

One of the first things he remembered when he entered the House in 1906 was a youthful Under-Secretary explaining to the House the terms of the Transvaal constitution. Among the speeches that were made in opposition was one by the then recently returned leader of the Opposition who denounced the constitution and described it as 'an experiment, the most reckless experiment ever tried'. He was replied to—I am quoting from the official record—by Sir Campbell Bannerman who declared that the speech just made was one of the most 'unworthy, provocative and mischievous'.

Still referring to the debate on Transvaal constitution, Mr. Benn mentioned the speech by another Opposition speaker who asked whether we could trust anyone at that time and who asked if it would be possible to trust General Smuts.

This was the very man Smuts who brought South Africa in on the side of

Britain in the War and that is the rule which past history shows to be the basis of the policy underlining the construction of the British Commonwealth. I believe sincerely that India stands on the same road. If you are asking India to make sacrifices which she is being asked to make, surely she is entitled to be assured that the cause for which this country is fighting is also her cause.

It must be remembered that we stand at the bar of world opinion. It is up to prove before the world that we are sincere in the professions we make.

Lord Lillithgow had made practical suggestions. He suggests that in order that Indian public opinion and efforts should be associated with the Government in the course of the War, Princes and major political parties should nominate candidates from whom he would select advisors.

That may be good or it may be a worthless offer. It is impossible to say. It may be no more than a committee to organise a fete or it may be something of real authority and partnership. If it is the first, then Indian leaders have a right to reject it, but if it is the second then I think they should consider it.

I believe that in the existing Council the Viceroy has the power to nominate Ministers without portfolio. It is not possible that members of these panels put forward by the major interest in India should form the corps from which the Viceroy could select. I do not know, but I am anxious that nothing should happen now between us and India to hinder the conduct of this righteous war.

There was the question of the constitution of the Assembly itself. Election has been postponed. I believe it is five years since there has been any election to the Central Legislature.

Mr. Wedgwood Benn asked, "If there is any way of securing a reflection of what I believe to be India's keen moral interest on the side of the Allies and this country. From the Indian side there is the danger that any makeshift might perhaps be an obstacle to greater and more important fundamental changes later."

Mr. Benn referred to the setting up in London of an imperial war cabinet and said "if you are going to have Prime Ministers from the Dominions in London you should have representatives of Princes and others here in London so that they may associate themselves with the conduct of the war. In this suggestion and especially in the first suggestion put forward by the Viceroy I think it is possible that we may find what the Viceroy called the germ of fuller and broader association."

With regard to the amendment of the 1935 Act Mr. Benn said: "That is admitted to be necessary by the Viceroy in the White Paper and it is far the most important thing. It is suggested in the White Paper that nothing could be done in this matter until after war. That no legislation could be passed in this house until after the war I agree. Mr. Gandhi says so and I agree. But we have before our eyes the example of 1917 when in the middle of the war Mr. Montagu went to India and laid the foundation for the Act of 1919."

When you read those reports you would see in the introduction that the presence of Commission in India did nothing to hinder India's part in the war. Indeed the presence of the Commission in India did a great deal to stimulate India's support which we sorely needed; in preparation all these things are painstaking and difficult but necessary. We ourselves have to do some very hard thinking but here I would quote the proverb with which I am sure Sir Samuel Hoare will agree and which I might offer to Sir John Anderson also "fine words butter no parsnip." We have to decide where we stand and how far we are prepared to go and what we are willing to do to make a reality of the freedom of India."

Going on to refer to defence, Mr. Benn said: "The question of defence in India does not stand where it did in 1930. We need the maximum of effort that India can make. We have improved it by an enlarged contribution that is or will be forthcoming as a result of the Chatfield Committee's report. We will not get the maximum contribution unless Indian responsibility and goodwill is behind it. Finally it must not be supposed that India is not affected by decision on foreign affairs made in this house. This was especially the case regarding policy in the Far East. If there were some way in which her opinion could be given weight, I feel sure that it would add clearly to the strength of our foreign policy."

Mr. Benn went on to refer to the minority problem in India, stating: "India is not the only country that has a minority problem. Every country has one but some have solved the problem and some have not. Canada has solved hers and South Africa has solved the racial problem. I look forward to the day when we shall see a United Ireland. In the same way but on a much more extensive scale"

India has a minority problem. I should say, therefore, that when the conference comes, the Hindu-Moslem problem must be solved by India itself. We require a conference truly representative of all India. I think it might meet in India and the task of any delegation we sent there should be in broad terms to set the seal on any agreement which Indians themselves may come to. Turning to the deadlock in India, Mr. Benn said that it was a very serious thing for us and added: We stand before the world and a deadlock in the growth of self-Government in India is extremely damaging to our prestige and I hope the Government is fully conscious that it is necessary to make an effort to end that deadlock. Also it is a problem for Indian leaders. Those eight provinces rank with many European states. You have Congress Ministries and you have Governors. The Governor has many safe-guards. Two years ago when the Congress were invited to form ministries they hesitated because they wanted assurance against safe-guards being used. No assurance was given but safe-guards have not been used. They were paper safe-guards. The conference of Responsible Government induced a sense of responsibility that made it totally unnecessary to safe-guards.

Continuing Mr. Benn said Indian leaders in these Provinces have set in motion policies and schemes in harmony with the spirit of their own people. They have done that for those who elected them to those governments. No one is asking them to relinquish the task and everyone desires them to continue in their responsibility. If they find it necessary to abandon those who sent them to discharge those duties it is a very serious decision for them to take. India is asked to enter this war beside Great Britain and France. When India asks for a definition of our war aims and we describe them as the defence of our interests I think that is not only foolish but untrue. We care about our interests but what do neutrals care about them. Yet, if our war aim is the defence of a great principle you can rally not only India but the whole world to it. And that is what it is. We are defending freedom for ourselves and for India and in fact she is defending freedom for herself and others weaker than she. Herr Hitler stands for everything that Indians hate—bureaucracy, centralised and brutal, suppression of religious thought, subjugation of native culture, domination of race under subjugation of war and defilement of brutal force. How can India do anything true to her own ideals but fight against it?

It is not only that India is asked to come to the side of Britain. That is only a partial statement. She is asked to come to the rescue of our country in this matter and save ourselves and others as well. I think of all those now voiceless victims inside Nazi prisons. I think of millions of Poles, Austrians, Czechs, Slovaks, Socialists and Christians. It is their heart that beats when they hear that some champion of the freedom they have lost is on the move. When they make that appeal to India I do not believe that leaders of Indian opinion can forget that ideal.

#### SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S SPEECH

Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I have very often confronted each other in the field of Indian debate. We have sometimes disagreed and very strongly disagreed. To-night in the debate that should assuage, rather than stimulate bitterness, let us for a few moments look back upon the occasions on which we have agreed. I very well remember one of them when he and I some eight or nine years ago in the House were defending Lord Irwin from criticism of those who said he ought not to have had conversations with Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Benn and I took the view and I believe we take it still, that when political opponents meet, it is better not to regard Government as holy of holies into which only orthodox dare enter. I am sure that he and I are agreed that to-day it is a matter of satisfaction that the Viceroy should see leaders of the principal parties concerned, even most extreme leaders—even my fellow old Harrovian Pandit Nehru. Let me say in passing what remarkable institution must be my old school which in the course of a single generation has produced Lord Baldwin, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the present First Lord of Admiralty. I must not be drawn aside into meditations upon old school ties but must go back and I do so with great pleasure to the eloquent, sympathetic and helpful speech to which we have just listened.

Since Mr. Wedgwood Benn and I last took part in these Indian debates, many events of staggering importance have taken place in the world. Catastrophes have come upon us; hopes have been frustrated; disillusionment has been wrought; evil has triumphed in many parts of the habitable globe. It has been a dark



picture but black as that picture has been, there have at any rate been some bright corners. There has been India. In the world of tumult, there has been this great sub-continent of 350 million souls at peace within its boundaries. At a time when democracies were being destroyed in Europe, we have seen eleven great democratic Governments come into being in India and join their forces with democratic peoples of the world. This ought surely to be grounds for great satisfaction to every member of the House.

Four years ago, there were some who honestly thought that Provincial Government would be a failure. They asked us over and over again in the long Indian debates; 'Will these Governments be able to maintain their stability? Will they be able to control their finances? Will they be able, most important of all, to maintain law and order for millions of human beings to whom they will be responsible? I am glad to think that if some of our hopes were dupes at any rate most of our fears would have proved to be liars and that to-day we can claim that in a world in which there have been a great many constitutional crashes in recent years there stands out this great constitutional success of Provincial Autonomy in India. It was with this background of the Indian achievement that on September 8 of this year, India and the British Commonwealth of Nations were faced with war. The crisis found India united in its determination to resist brute force and in the realisation that danger was a common danger threatening every part of the British Commonwealth of nations. It was in face of this unity that the Viceroy who, during the whole course of his career in India and during many years that he was occupied in the Joint Select Committee in this country, showed whole-hearted and sincere desire for Indian good-will and co-operation. It was at this moment that he took the steps with the object of availing himself to the full of this united feeling in India and this common purpose that should bind India and the rest of the countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

As Mr. Wedgwood Benn has said, the Viceroy first had a series of interviews with the leaders of Indian opinion and as a result of those interviews he made two definite proposals. The first was rather in the nature of a pledge. It was a clear and definite statement that at the end of the war, there would be a consideration of the constitutional problem in the light of the experience of recent years. Secondly, with a view to availing himself of Indian advice and with the intention of bringing Indian leaders within his confidence, he suggested that a Consultative Committee should be formed to discuss with him many problems arising out of the war and to bring him into the closest and most constant contact with the trend of Indian opinion.

I will say a word about both these proposals. The proposal regarding the Consultative Committee was made with the full desire to obtain the greatest possible co-operation with the principal bodies of Indian public opinion. The Congress' admittedly the greatest party in India, rejected it. Non-Congress India, representing many millions of Indians, substantially accepted it. It may be asked, would it not have been possible for the Viceroy to have gone further and made some kind of proposal that would have avoided this division of opinion between Congress and non-Congress India? This is the first question, and it is a very important one to which I would invite the attention of the House. If the members are to follow its implications, they must recall to their minds some of the most important discussions that took place over the Government of India Act. They centred round the pledge of Dominion Status and the aim of the Indian policy. These pledges, as Mr. Wedgwood Benn has said, were repeated time after time. They were reaffirmed in very precise terms in the speech with which I introduced the second reading of the Government of India Bill. I made it clear, and I make it clear again to-day, that we stood by Lord Irwin's pledge and that when we spoke of Dominion Status, we meant what we said and did not mean some system of Government that deprived India of full status of equality with the other members of the British Commonwealth.

There are no two kinds of Dominion Status as some people seem to think. The Dominion Status that we contemplated was Dominion Status which has been described by Mr. Wedgwood Benn—Dominion Status of 1926. I went on to state that Dominion Status is not a prize that is given to a deserving community but is the recognition of the facts that actually exist. As soon as these facts exist in India—and in my view the sooner they exist the better the aim of our policy will be achieved. If there are difficulties in the way they are not of our making. They are inherent in the many divisions between the classes and communities in the

great sub-continent. It must be the aim of Indians themselves to remove these divisions just as it should be our aim to help Indians in their task. So far are we from wishing to divide and govern that we regard these divisions as a calamity and are ready to do our utmost to remove them. We have shown our good faith in the matter. We showed it when we made the Communal Award. At that time, supposing we had wished to divide and conquer, we might very well have said, 'Settle your own communal differences first. Until you have settled them, there can be no constitutional advance.' We did not take that course but at great risk to ourselves and in the face of much criticism we made the Communal Award without which Provincial Autonomy would have been impossible.

But in spite of our Award, these divisions still exist and until they are removed, we have responsibilities to the minorities that we cannot repudiate. That was our position in 1935 and it is our position to-day. We wish to see these divisions removed but we shall never get them removed, if we shut our eyes to their existence and refuse to admit that they are there. It is these divisions that have made so difficult the task of setting up responsible Government at the centre and of achieving the great ideal of an All India Federation.

The Princes are afraid of domination by British India, the Moslems are firmly opposed to a Hindu Majority at the Centre. The Depressed classes and other minorities genuinely believe that responsible Government, meaning a Government dependent on the Hindu Majority, will sacrifice their interests. These anxieties still exist. I wish they did not. But as long as they exist, it is impossible for the Government to accept the demand for immediate and full responsibility at the Centre on a particular date.

If we did so, we should be false to the pledges that time after time we have given in the most solemn words to the Muslims, other minorities and the European community. It may be said, supposing that full and immediate responsibility at the Centre is impossible, are there not other steps that could be taken to show our good faith and to make clear to India that that goal is just as much in our minds to-day as it was when we made those pledges four years ago? Mr. Wedgwood Benn himself made a number of these suggestions this afternoon and I will try to deal with them.

Firstly, let me disabuse him of the idea which I think he held that we are contemplating in the near future an Imperial War Cabinet in London and that in it India ought to be represented by more than a single representative. At present there is no intention to set up an Imperial War Cabinet of that kind. If and when the time comes, I will certainly remember the observations he has made on the subject and I imagine they will be given extremely careful attention.

Next he spoke on the project that has been discussed more than once before. He asked: Would it not be possible to introduce into the Viceroy's Council political leaders who would hold portfolios in certain of the great Departments? As I have said, this is not a new proposal. I remember it being made during the joint discussions of the Joint Select Committee.

I think the leader of the opposition himself made it at one time. We went fully into it then and at that time we found ourselves confronted by certain difficulties in the way of its adoption. I do not enumerate those difficulties to-night.

I wish to close no door; I wish to explore every possibility within the ambit of the Government of India Act. I agree with very much of what Mr. Wedgwood Benn said as to the impossibility of having constitutional reform by stages in wartime or contemplating another Government of India Act when we are in the throes of this terrible struggle. I do not elaborate the difficulties that are inherent in a suggestion of this kind.

He knows them as well as I do. But so far as the British Government are concerned, we see no reason why provided that difficulties are remembered, this proposal should not be very carefully considered.

The second of the Viceroy's proposals was the proposal of the Consultative Committee. As Mr. Wedgwood Benn said the Consultative Committee may mean anything or nothing. It may merely be a device for sidetracking the Opposition or it may be an attempt to obtain real co-operation.

The Congress, in my view, with undue haste has assumed that the Viceroy's Consultative Committee means nothing; that it is merely a device for the purpose of postponing constitutional advance. The Princes and the Moslems and other parties do not take this view. They believe that a body of this kind can be of real

value to India and that, if it is set up, it will prove to be a further step towards and not away from responsible Government.

I feel that the Congress have been too hasty in their repudiation of this proposal. Let them and other political leaders clear up any doubts that they have as to the scope of its working and personnel that would be members of it. If they do I believe they will find that it is the definite intention of the Viceroy to take Indian political leaders into his confidence on many problems that arise out of the conduct of the war and that it is his convinced belief that if Indian leaders of different parties and communities in British India and Indian India meet to discuss these manifold questions, their advice will carry the greatest possible weight with the Indian Executive, and perhaps, even more important, that their meetings by bringing together divergent interests will materially help to provide that basis of agreement among Indians themselves which is essential to swift constitutional advance. I believe that the great possibilities of consultation of this kind have not been sufficiently appreciated. If they are fully used—and I give an undertaking that the Viceroy is anxious to make the fullest use of them—they may well prove to be the bridge that is needed to carry Indians over the great divide of communal bitterness that at present stands chiefly in the way of constitutional advance. If it be the case that these wartime meetings will make easier constitutional discussions that will take place after the war, what a calamity it would be, if for some reason or other they were not started.

Mr. Wedgwood Benn spoke of the discussions that took place in the last war on the subject of the constitution. He mentioned the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions and asked whether it would be possible for discussions of that kind to take place in the course of this war. I do not wish to give a final answer but I would point out that in certain respects the situation to-day differs a good deal from the situation at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions. The issues had not then become so bitter as they have to-day. I am thinking more particularly of the communal issue. Further, at any rate at the beginning of a war, it seems to me impossible for discussions of that kind to take place. The Montagu-Chelmsford discussions only took place, I think, ~~three~~ years after the beginning of the last war. As I have said, however, I would rather not give a final answer to-night on a point of that kind. Nor indeed would I give a final answer on another question Mr. Wedgwood Benn has raised, namely, that there should be a general election in India. At any rate, at the beginning of a war a general election would seem to me to be almost impossible. In India, officials are working night and day on war work. Moreover, there would be the fact that communal feelings would, I am sure, be very much aroused in an election and while again I do not want to dogmatise and use terms like "never" and "in no circumstances", I would say that as things are to-day, a general election to the Central legislature would, in my opinion, be impossible.

To come back to the broad question of consultation. The Viceroy has not tied himself down to the exact methods of this consultation. It is essentially a question to be settled between him and the political leaders. I am able to state that he is ready to discuss the method and details with the leaders and he proposes without delay to send invitations to meet him for these discussions. Until these and other discussions take place, I claim that it would be a blunder of the first magnitude to take up an irrevocable position. Let the Indian leaders weigh these possibilities. Let them meet and discuss them once again with the Viceroy. And let them also ponder once again upon the alternatives.

As regards the alternative of direct and immediate responsibility at the Centre, I hope I will convince the House that in the present circumstances, it is impossible to accept an alternative of that kind. I come to another alternative and I would ask the Indian leaders seriously once again to ponder upon it. I wish, indeed, that I had not to make any reference to it at all. It is the alternative of non-cooperation, an alternative under which the Indian Congress goes its own way and the British Government and the minority communities in India go theirs. If it came to this issue, we should have no choice. The King-Emperor's Government must be carried on and it would be carried on with efficiency, with strength and with justice. We, like any other Government in similar circumstances, would give the Viceroy our full support. But let every man of goodwill in India and Great Britain contemplate the waste that such a course of non-co-operation would mean. There would be a waste of all our constitutional efforts with these many years of hard work, Conferences, Joint Select Committees and debates in this House. There would be the waste of all the effort we have made to bring to an end the grim disaster of

non-co-operation and to make it easier for the Indians and the British to work together towards the solution of these great problems.

When I went to the India Office, I found non-co-operation in full blast. During four years that I was the Secretary of State like Mr. Wedgwood Benn who was my predecessor, almost my sole effort was to bring the British and the Indians together and to put an end to this chapter of wasted effort and miserable controversy. I hoped that when the Act came into force, this chapter would be brought to an end. But it is here now in the face of the greatest crisis that has ever confronted the world, a crisis in which our danger is India's and India's danger ours, in which our determination to set up a new and better order in the world is as great as India's and India's is as great as ours. There is a grave risk of our drifting into a position in which we shall be wrangling with each other instead of fighting the enemy on the common front.

I am told, though I can scarcely believe it, that it is being said in some quarters in India that the British Government is searching for a conflict. I repudiate that suggestion with all the power I have. The British Government wants co-operation and not conflict, the British Government wants to see the aim of its policy achieved and conditions realised in which India can take its true place in the British Commonwealth of free peoples. Non-co-operation may put the clock back for years. Whether its promoters desire it or not, non-co-operation leads to Civil Disobedience, to breaches of Law and Order and to a vicious circle of riot and repression from which we had hoped to have escaped for ever. Until these things actually happen, I will not believe that they are going to happen. I shall continue to believe that when these great peoples of our own and the peoples of India are faced with a common danger and inspired with a common ideal, non-co-operation of any large section of a community would be a calamity and futility of the first magnitude. Millions of Indians in British and in the States agree with this view. They wish to co-operate with us just as much as we wish to work with them. And the Congress party itself—I quote words of Mr. Gandhi spoken three days ago, 'wanted to help Britain by giving her moral support, which was its speciality. The Congress would not give this unless it was clear that Britain's morality was wholly sound.'

I claim that our position is as sound as a bell. In good faith and perfect sincerity, we have started India on the greatest constitutional experiment that the world had ever seen. We have long ago set aside imperialistic ambitions. We believe that our mission in the world is not to govern other people but to help other people to govern themselves. It was in this spirit that Parliament passed a series of great acts which gave the dominions their free constitution. It was in this spirit that we passed the Government of India Act of 1935 and under which, of our own free will, we transferred wide authority to the Indian Government. It is in this spirit that we intend to administer the act and during the war to do our utmost to remove the divisions that stand in the way of its full achievement. And, when the war ends, and ends victoriously as a result of the Empire's united efforts, we mean to proceed at once to deal with the constitutional difficulties that have emerged in the experience of recent years. Non-co-operation and non-co-operation alone will stop this swift and steady progress. For those of us who have devoted years of our lives to the building of the new constitution, often at some risk to ourselves, for those of us who are thrilled by the antiquity of the Indian civilisation, for those of us who are proud of the common effort that Indians and we have made to give India a unique position in the continent of Asia, another chapter of strife, controversy and non-co-operation would come as a great human tragedy. Such a breach in the common front would be a repudiation at one of the gravest moments in the world's history of the call to both of us to resist the aggressor, to fight brute force and to build up a new better order in the world in which we and Indians can go about our lawful vocations without the peril that now walks by day and night in so many parts of this suffering world.

It was not—I quote the Prime Minister's weighty words of October 12—with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on the war but simply in defence of freedom. It is not alone freedom of small nations that is at stake. There is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France and indeed of all freedom loving nations. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle, and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. Looking to the future we can see deep changes will inevitably leave their mark on

every field of men's thought and actions and if humanity is to guide aright the new forces that will be in operation all nations will have their part to play. In this new world India has a great part to play, perhaps in area the greatest of any Asiatic country, a great part also in the British commonwealth of nations, for it will be an outward and visible sign that with us there is no racial discrimination. It has a great part also to play in the world at large, for India should stand out as a model of a League of Nations from which war has for generations been banished and the rule of law and justice firmly set. With this great hope before us, let us once and for all abandon the barren paths of non-co-operation and help each other to win the war and to win peace and in this double victory to take steps towards the fruition of India's hopes.

#### Statements on Sir Samuel Hoare's Declaration

##### (1) MAHATMA GANDHI'S STATEMENT

I have read Sir Samuel Hoare's speech with the attention it deserves. I appreciate the conciliatory tone behind it. It makes it, therefore, embarrassing for me to produce what may appear to be a jarring note. But even as he speaks from a sense of duty I hope I shall receive the same credit. Has Dominion Status for India any meaning unless it is synonymous with independence? Has the India of his imagination the right to secede from the Commonwealth? I like the declaration that the British have shed imperialistic ambition. Will he allow the people of India to judge for themselves whether in reality that ambition has been shed? If it is, the proof of it should be forthcoming even before India is statutorily declared independent.

When the protection of minorities is pleaded against the declaration required by the Congress, the great pronouncement made by Sir Samuel Hoare sounds unreal. What the Congress has asked is not any sounding of Indian opinion but a declaration of Britain's intention. I have endeavoured to show that there is no such thing as real minorities in India whose rights can be endangered by India becoming independent. With the exception of the Depressed Classes there is no minority which is not able to take care of itself. I observe that Sir Samuel Hoare has mentioned the Europeans also as a minority. The very mention of Europeans, in my opinion, condemns the cry of the interest of minorities. But the protection of minorities, whatever they are, is common cause between the British Government and the Congress. I would like the British Government to remember that there is every prospect of Congress India, to use Sir Samuel's phrase, being a hopeless minority. I like Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress and non-Congress. And if non-Congress India contains not merely the Princes but the people of Princes' India, all the Mussalmans, all those who might be represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and others who refuse to be classified as part of Congress India, it is Congress India which will be in danger of a non-Congress majority. And the Congress has got to make good its position even though it may represent a minority wholly unarmed, partly by outside force but largely by its own will.

I am glad that Sir Samuel Hoare has declared that the present British policy is to be judged in the moral scales suggested by me. I venture to suggest that if Sir Samuel's speech is the last word on behalf of the British Government, British political morality will be found wanting. Sir Samuel has laughed at non-cooperation as a barren doctrine. I am convinced that it is not as barren as he thinks. It has proved its worth in the eyes of millions of Indians and will do so again if the Congress remains truly non-violent, as I hope it will. The Congress decision is an imperative call of duty. It puts both the Congress and the British Government on their trial. Nothing but good will come out of it if both will play the game.

##### Rajendra Prasad's Statement

*Interviewed on the House, of Commons debate on India, Babu Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President said :*

Mahatma Gandhi's statement represents my reaction to Sir Samuel Hoare's speech in the House of Commons and it is hardly necessary for me to say much more. Because we were in doubt whether the freedom and democracy we were asked to help in securing for other countries were intended for us also, we wanted a clear declaration of the British aims and solicitation of them. We have seen

told in effect that we cannot be promised that freedom and democracy, because we have our own internal differences. The problem of the protection of minorities has been brought out as a difficulty in the way of India's advance to freedom. I do not ignore or minimise it. But may I ask when has the British Government offered to Indians that it will accept a constitution which Indians, including, of course, the minorities will frame for themselves.

Let the British Government throw on Indians the responsibility of producing an agreed constitution without any interference from outside and promise to give statutory effect to it when produced. That will be a genuine offer. Without it, all talk of protection of minorities looks like an excuse for perpetuating the 'status quo.' The mention of Europeans as a minority recalls the discussions for safeguarding British interests. Indians should not be blamed if they regard the plea in favour of minorities as a screen for protecting British interests.

The Congress insists on a charter of independence to be framed by a constituent assembly of representatives selected on universal franchise. But those who are prepared to accept dominion status may well ask—is dominion status of 1926 mentioned by Sir Samuel Hoare the same or something different from what is provided by the Statute of Westminster? Why has he fought shy of mentioning the Statute of Westminster?

Behind all the conciliatory words of Sir Samuel Hoare, there is clear intention not to give full responsible government—not to speak of independence—to India even at the end of the war. Let the British Government realise that India is not to be satisfied by a promise of gradual advance by stages. She wants full freedom and the right to frame her own constitution.

#### Indian Debate in House of Lords

##### *Lord Samuel and Lord Zetland on the War Situation and India.*

In the House of Lords, on the 2nd November 1939 Lord Samuel after dealing with the war situation and M. Molotov's speech said, I now return to the subject of India on which many must feel grave concern. The matter has been discussed fully in the House of Commons and I trust this House will think it not inappropriate that it should be discussed here also, it being the desire of all to say nothing which will embarrass the Government in the difficult negotiations in which they are engaged. On the contrary, some observations made here may even be of assistance. Lord Samuel added, it is desirable to emphasise not only on matters whereon there have been disagreements between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Congress party on the other, but also to point out points of agreement which are numerous and important.

In the first place, on the supreme issue of the moment—opposition to Hitlerism—there is complete agreement between Indian opinion and the views in this country. If India thought that in this war we are wrong on merits and if their sympathies were with our opponents then, indeed, it would be a most grave matter. The contrary is the case. Hitlerism is the very antithesis of Hinduism with its creed of non-violence. The only resemblance is that Hitler is a vegetarian. But politically, he (Hitler) was highly carnivorous and Indian opinion recognises that and it is unanimous in the detestation of the underlying ideas of the Nazi creed. On the merits of the great issue before the world India is as wholeheartedly with this country as Australia and New Zealand, and as Canada has been so strikingly shown to be by the elections in Quebec.

It is now agreed in principle that India shall have Dominion Status, and the disagreement is as to when and how. Questions are raised now from the Indian side whether Dominion Status is adequate.

There was general agreement on the principle of federation for India. I journeyed through India for some months last year and found that while in no quarters were the Federal proposals in the Act of 1930 approved in all particulars and were opposed on important points, everybody agreed that somehow there should be a federation for India with the Central Government resting on the representation of the people. Mr. Gandhi said to me, and I think said in public, 'Federation, yes, but not this federation.'

So while there is general agreement in principle on this important matter there is division as to the form and powers to be embodied in the Federal Constitution.

Next, there is agreement between the British Government and the Congress, as

to the need for carefully provided justice for minority communities. The Congress recognises that the communal problem is a real problem, not to be brushed aside, but one which requires to be patiently settled.

There is agreement with respect to the Provincial Government. Almost everywhere I found people concurred that the provincial constitutions have been working with success. The British Governors of provinces may not approve all that has been done, but they have no reason to complain of the general attitude of their Ministries. The safe-guards inserted, because of the fear of chaos in the provinces, have never had to be employed and the Viceroy, in the White Paper recently published, pays a warm tribute to the success of provincial Ministries.

On the other hand, the Ministries themselves had no cause to complain of the Governors and I heard when I was there no word from any quarter that there has been any improper interference with the working of the constitutions in the provinces, so that there is over a large sphere broad basis of agreement.

The complaint is made by the Congress that while the British Government agree to Dominion Status in principle, they take no steps to give effect to or implement it in practice. Sir Samuel Hoare has said that pledges had been made time after time that Dominion Status was the aim of the Indian policy. The Viceroy, in the White Paper, says we are working to the end that India may attain her due place amongst the great Dominions and he quotes this statement, 'The natural issue of the Indian progress is the attainment of Dominion Status.' The aim—the issue—is almost something in the future. The last quotation was from a statement made by the present Foreign Secretary, then Lord Irwin, and the date was 1929—ten years ago.

Year after year goes by and this policy which is declared the goal, the end, the aim, is not in fact carried into effect and Indian political leaders see the best years of their lives go by and they are still in the phase of struggle.

I may be permitted to use the familiar quotation, 'man never is but always to be blessed.' It is like some mountain climber who sees what he takes to be the summit before him and when he reaches the top of the ridge after much effort sees that the summit lies farther beyond, and again when he struggles on to a further ridge the goal is still out of his grasp.

The Government say that if only Indians could agree among themselves on the outstanding questions as between the communities and between the Congress party and the States, at once Dominion Status could be brought into effect. But that in substance means that Moslems are to have veto on the introduction of Dominion Status. Mohammedan India is not eager for federation. They are rather apprehensive of the possible results of federation and they are not pressing for Dominion Status. It is natural for them to say to the Hindus, 'Unless you can concede all we want, we will refuse an agreement and if we refuse an agreement the British Government say they will not introduce Dominion Status'.

Consequently, the present policy of His Majesty's Government leads to the conclusion that the final decision is left with the Moslems, that would mean one-fourth of the population of India is to decide the future of India rather than three-fourth. Such a situation may easily become a permanent deadlock and it is not surprising that the Congress suspects that that is the intention.

All of us in this House, I think, understand the Moslem position and sympathise with that. Undoubtedly Great Britain has duties towards Moslems of India. We cannot wash our hands of the question and say that their future is no concern of ours. And it is the case that friction is serious between Hindu and Moslem communities. When I was there last year I was told by almost everyone that in most places friction was worse in recent years between Moslems and Hindus than earlier. That is not so everywhere. In great States like Hyderabad and Mysore the question is quiescent, thanks mainly to the wise policy of the Princes and their able ministers, but over greater part of India it is almost chronic sometimes acute and dangerous. The minorities must be protected in their rights, and if the minorities have rights, so also have the majorities. It is the fundamental problem of democracy in countries of mixed population how to reconcile the principle of Government by majority vote with securing liberties of minority communities.

In a country which is homogeneous or substantially so like Britain or France or which has become homogeneous like the United States, the question does not arise; but in those, where there are several different races of religions or communities within the same geographical area as in many States of Eastern Europe, the Balkans or India, that there is a great problem which prevents democratic

stitutions from working at all. You have conflict of two principles ; has the majority the right to decide on main issues ? It has, we believe, in a democracy. On the other hand, have the members of the minority communities right to be protected ? They have. But if the two principles clash what then ?

There is in India the further complication of States. The Princes have their treaty rights and it is obviously a sound principle of Government that treaties must be respected. But if the Princes have treaty rights their peoples have moral rights and we cannot say that the eighteenth or early nineteenth century treaties are to be allowed to block for all time the development of modern institutions, and I do not think that the Princes themselves would claim it.

There, in relation to the Princes' rights, peoples' rights, majority rights and minority rights, we must reach a conclusion that both sets of rights must be respected. How the two can be reconciled is the task of resourceful statesmanship.

It appears to me that recently His Majesty's Government here and in India have not shown sufficient zeal and energy in tackling these difficult problems. They have been rather too much content to let matters drift. I believe the present Viceroy himself, as far as Federation is concerned, is most eager and has been most eager to secure a solution and devoted himself with much persistency to achieving that. He recognised that in order to achieve Dominion Status and Federation it is necessary to solve the problem of minorities. He has been engaged in long and difficult negotiations.

The outbreak of the war has been held necessarily to postpone these negotiations. I rather suspect that the postponement owing to war brought a sigh of relief from many breasts in New Delhi and perhaps Whitehall at the unexpected and welcome respite. All these inter-locked problems—minorities, Federation and Dominion Status—ought not to be postponed and the Congress is right in urging that the questions be taken in hand now.

It has been assumed in many quarters that the outbreak of the war made it impossible even to conceive of these matters being pressed, but I do not see why statesmen who would be engaged in dealing with these Indian constitutional problems, are not those who would be engaged in active prosecution of war measures. It might well be that a group might be considering these questions in India or here, while others devote their energies entirely to war.

During the last War the House will remember several of our most embittered and difficult problems were settled while the War was proceeding, and it would be immense proof of the strength and governing ability, if while with one hand we were conducting a great war, with the other we were dealing with difficult material problems in some parts of the Empire.

I was glad to notice in the debate in the other House that several speakers thought that after all some of these questions must be considered in the immediate future. I notice that Mr. Wedgwood Benn took that view and Sir Samuel Hoare and the Under-Secretary did not dissent from that. I regret that the White Paper suggests a different course. The Viceroy there has proposed that the only step to be taken during the war was the establishment of a Consultative Group, the membership of which he outlined and this group, to quote the words of the White Paper 'would have as its objects the association of public interests in India with the conduct of war and with questions relating to war activities.'

It appears to me impossible to draw the line and say that all consideration of constitutional issues would be 'ultra vires.' The National Congress members say with emphasis that they are not prepared to discuss what should be the war measures to be taken by India unless they know what share India should have in determining what those war measures shall be. I trust that it will be possible for Lord Zetland to give us some guidance on that aspect.

The White Paper does embody one definite advance. Contrary to what has been said hitherto, it agrees that any Agreement of the 1935 Act in respect of Federation should be contemplated before Federation is brought into effect. That is a considerable step to meet Indian opinion. I trust that the second step will be taken, namely, that all these matters shall not be postponed until after the war but dealt with now. I trust the House will not be deterred from approving an action of that kind by the use by Mr. Gandhi and members of the Congress of the word 'Independence' as defining their true object. Mr. Gandhi has explained to me and others that by 'Independence' he does not necessarily mean separation from the Empire, but means that the Indian people should have the right to determine in freedom for themselves what should be the future of their own country. Many of us think that if they



conceded that right they will unquestionably agree to continue the membership of the British Commonwealth on the same footing as the present Dominions.

I cannot suppose that Mr. Gandhi or his colleagues would suggest that in these discussions representatives of Great Britain should take no part. It appears to me essential that we should take part, first, because we have obligations to the Moslems and the Princes, from which we cannot in honour withdraw; secondly, because the future defence of India must rest in a great degree with the British Commonwealth. I cannot imagine that India in the near future would wish to undertake the immense cost for providing herself adequate defences apart from the British Empire.

If she did not do so, she would run the risk of the same fate at the hands of one or more of her aggressive neighbours as has befallen China. If Britain took part in the discussions then the two sides are not very far apart. The Viceroy in the White Paper statement said, 'I am authorised by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of various communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in framing all such modifications of the 1935 Act as may seem desirable.'

That is not very far removed from the Constituent Assembly which the Congress pleaded for. It appears to me that the difference between the two might be reached with no very great difficulty. If a meeting took place in India and if it were fully representative of the Indian people with the present Indian Government, it is not unlike a Constituent Assembly, which the Congress desired.

I venture to make one suggestion not, of course, expecting any immediate or early reply and that is whether the time has not come in connection with these changes that there should now be established a Privy Council in India. If a body modelled on our Privy Council, which is not sufficiently used here, were to be established in India containing leaders belonging to different sections and men not only in Ministerial office, but out of it, it might be easier to secure adequate discussion on matters of interest to different communities.

Further, it appears to me quite essential that when discussions take place at the end of the war on the terms of peace and arrangements to be made subsequently and when the Dominions, as they certainly will be, are brought into consultation, India should be brought into consultation on equal terms.

Even if on that date Dominion Status has not been enacted by statute, still that step might be taken. It would be quite in accordance with the British ideas if such a measure were adopted in practice before it has been recognised in law.

Furthermore I would urge upon the Government that they should breathe through their declaration of policy a conception of the new position in India and the future, which is not far distant for her.

After all we sometimes do not remember that of every ten inhabitants in the British Empire seven are Indians. I do not see in the language of this White Paper and in the methods of consultation proposed the new spirit in relation to India, which the time requires.

Let me say finally, I am bound to express the view that the action of the Congress in calling upon the Provincial Ministries to resign was wrong. It appears to be an error of political judgment. Although I am in general agreement with most of the underlying aims of the Congress, I think tactically they have been in error. Anyone who visited the provinces as I did last year and saw the constitutions at work must feel profound satisfaction at their success. Controversies there have been of course and the Government by their vigorous action have aroused opposition here and there but they have already achieved a great body of beneficial legislation such as no bureaucratic administration could have accomplished and the Viceroy has paid a warm tribute to their work in the White Paper.

That work is too important to be interrupted and thrown into confusion on account of political issues having nothing to do with the Provincial Governments, and more mature political experience would have allowed the Congress Working Committee to realise that this was mistaken method.

Lord Samuel compared the action, which had been taken to the action sometimes taken in the early history of trade unions or the gestures sometimes adopted in the continental Parliaments.

It is wrong, at any time, but in India at the present moment it is doubly wrong when the British Empire is engaged in a life and death struggle for a supreme purpose with which India is in whole-hearted sympathy. They were wrong.

to take such action, which cannot fail to weaken in some degree the moral position of Great Britain and therefore hamper the conduct of war.

I trust they will not persist in that policy, but that the provincial Governments in the provinces where the Congress has a majority will, after no long interval, return to office and resume their indispensable work. I hope the Government will make it as easy as possible to arrive at an accommodation, and so take a further step forward towards the aims that we shall not merely maintain in India an Imperialistic rule over reluctant subjects, but succeed in enlisting the co-operation of a proud and self-respecting nation.

#### LORD ZETLAND'S SPEECH

Lord Zetland said that the Secretary of State for India, in these days, was always apt to find himself in the unhappy position of being between the hammer on the left and anvil on the right.

I know quite well that the noble Marquess (Salisbury) has doubted the wisdom of the Act of 1935. He had always held perfectly sincere doubts as to the workability of the Act. We all respect the sincerity of his beliefs. I disagreed with him in the early days on that matter. I disagree with him still. I am bound to say that on the whole the provisions of the Act under which the Ministries were set up in the provinces in British India have been fully justified, even by the short experience of three years, we have had of their working. Lord Samuel spoke about Federation. He has told us that in the course of his tour in India he had found on all sides there was agreement that the solution of the Central Government of India must be federal in character. I think he has told us that there were objections raised by different parties concerned to the particular form of Federation or some part thereof in the Act of 1935. Very well, he agrees that Federation is the necessary form of Government for the Centre, but then Lord Samuel said, 'you have promised India Dominion Status. It is always coming, but has never come.' 'But what,' he asked, 'have you done to give effect to your intention?' I rather gather from the speech of Lord Samuel that he thought we could bring Federation and Dominion Status into effect to-morrow, if only we had the will to do so.

The noble Lord spoke of the pledge given by the Foreign Secretary and said that the natural issue for India was the attainment of Dominion Status. But his comment was that that was in 1929. Does he suggest that a Federation could be formed before the units have come into existence? Surely, the purpose of one part of the Act of 1935 was to create units, which would subsequently be federated. The noble Lord may say that we took a long time in drawing up the provisions of the Act of 1935. We did, but if he had been a member, not only of the Joint Select Committee, he would realise little more clearly than he does to-day of the extraordinary difficulties and the complexity of the problem we have to try and solve. He made a reference to the Viceroy's statement and said the promise contained therein that at the end of the war he would take into consultation leaders of various communities and parties interested with a view to effecting such modifications of the federal provisions as might seem desirable, was all to the good. But he said very little of what we are proposing to do pending the end of the war.

I cannot agree with him if he thinks you can redraft the federal provisions of the Act with a view to bringing Federation into existence, while we are all burdened with the task of carrying on a life and death struggle. But we do agree that it is natural that leaders of Indian public opinion should be associated in some way with the Central Government during the progress of the war and it was with a view to bringing them into close association with the Central Government that we proposed a consultative body.

That was a perfectly sincere and genuine attempt to associate leaders of Indian political parties with the Central Government with the conduct of the war. I remember observing to the House that, in my opinion, it would have three different advantages. Firstly, it would have enabled the Governor-General to communicate to leaders of political parties confidential information. Secondly, it would have enabled them to express opinions frankly to the Governor-General on their views of the measures the Government are proposing to take and since the whole idea was conceived on the assumption that there would be goodwill of both sides with the Governor-General and that members would have collaborated for common purpose and, as it is perfectly well-known, all of them have at heart the successful prosecution of war, I regarded it as automatic that the Viceroy would have attached the utmost worth to the views expressed by such body in such circumstances. The third advantage, I said, it would have meant, since the re-

representatives of different communities would be working in close association not only with the Governor-General but with one another it would tend to lessen the differences whereby they are at present divided and would bring to the surface such measure of common ground as would justify us inviting them to become associated with the Government in even more responsible position. I regret profoundly that the proposal does not appear to have been received in India in the spirit wherein it was given.

Meanwhile, these communal differences persist. I need not lay stress upon them. They are known to your Lordships. The manifesto of the All-India Moslem League as well as the manifesto of the Congress are in 'the White Paper' and since then the leader of the All-India Moslem League has issued a statement, which appeared in the "Manchester Guardian" only two or three days ago.

I do not want to underline the differences, but they cannot be ignored. You have to try somehow or other to reconcile them. What in these circumstances is the path of wisdom? Surely the path of wisdom in these circumstances is to invite leaders in the first instance of two main communities—Hindus as represented by the Congress, Moslems as represented by the All-India Moslem League—to meet under the auspices of a neutral and discuss their differences frankly and see whether they cannot find some solution thereto. That is precisely what the Viceroy is doing at the present moment. He has invited leaders of the Congress and the All-India Moslem League to meet him for that very purpose and I have no hesitation in saying that if as a result of these discussions and consultations we can find a common ground on which the two great communities will work together then the main obstacle in the way of associating leaders of political parties in the actual executive at the centre will have been removed.

I need hardly say I share the regret expressed by Lord Samuel at the action taken by the Congress Ministries in the provinces. I agree with him that it has been a most unfortunate move and I believe that history will prove that it has been most unwise. But there it is, with it seems to me an undue haste; while discussions are still proceeding, the Ministries in four of the provinces have already tendered resignations and the resignation of the Ministry in a fifth province is expected in the very near future. That will mean that the Government will be obliged to proclaim the breakdown of the constitution as far as the provinces are concerned and to take into its own hands the administration.

There is one comment I would make on what Lord Samuel said with regard to this communal difficulty. He (Lord Samuel) admitted that in British India communal feeling had certainly not decreased in recent times, but he is apparently under the impression that the problem does not exist in Indian States.

(Lord Samuel dissenting said that he was not generalising.)

But Lord Samuel was singularly unfortunate in selecting Hyderabad as example, because throughout the last summer the communal question has presented a profound problem. It was a Hindu movement against the Moslem Government and for months bands of Hindus had been proceeding from other parts of India into Hyderabad itself in order to carry on a campaign of civil disobedience.

The communal problem is not confined to British India, nor is it true to say it has not become accentuated in, at any rate, some of the Indian States during the past two or three years.

Let me only say this in conclusion with regard to our war aims in India. It is sometimes said still in India that we are fighting to maintain Imperialism in that country. If by British Imperialism is meant domination and exploitation of one people by another people, I say that if it ever existed, it was abandoned by Parliament, when it accepted the Preamble to the Act of 1919 and every step, which has been taken since that time, has emphasised and ratified the determination of the people of this country to work for self-government of India.

I cannot conceive of anyone, who wished to maintain Imperialism in India in the sense wherein I have described, having voted for the Act of 1935, which was passed by a large majority by the House of Lords and Commons. No, our intentions remain what they have been ever since the Act of 1919. We are striving our best with all alacrity to assist in removing obstacles, which at present lie in the path of full realisation of the promises which have been made and while I appreciate both the difficulties of the noble Marquess (Salisbury) in going with me as far as that and I appreciate the intentions of Lord Samuel, who wishes to see a great strengthening of the position with which we are engaged. I still find that all my greatest satisfaction that has come to me as the Secretary of State, since

day of the year for the past four or five years that it is no use ignoring difficulties in our path. What you may do is to work patiently and in all sincerity to remove them.

#### Text of Viceregal Statement and Correspondence

His Excellency the Viceroy issued the following statement releasing his correspondence with the Indian Leaders on the 5th. November 1939 :—

War was declared on the 3rd September. In a broadcast that night I appealed to all parties and all sections in India to co-operate in its prosecution. On the following day I saw Mr. Gandhi in Simla, and discussed the whole position freely with him. I similarly took immediate steps to see Mr. Jinnah as representing the Muslim League. Nor did I fail to see the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes.

Thereafter the general question came for consideration before the Congress Working Committee of the Muslim League. The Working Committee of the Congress met on the 15th of September. They condemned Nazi aggression in decisive terms. But they postponed a final decision so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future, and they invited the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what were their war aims and how those aims would apply to India, and be given effect to in the present. Mr. Gandhi, expressing his full agreement with the Working Committee's statement, remarked that he had been sorry to find himself alone in seeking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally.

The Working Committee of the Muslim League on the 18th September similarly asked, "if full, effective, and honourable co-operation of the Mussalmans is desired," that "a sense of security and satisfaction" should be created amongst Muslims, and referred in particular to the position of the Muslims in Congress provinces, and to the necessity for consulting the Muslims fully regarding any change in the existing constitution and securing their consent and approval.

I now again got in touch with Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. I decided that, given the great divergence of view which clearly existed between the two major political parties in British India, I must satisfy myself as to the trend of feeling in the country. In pursuance of that object I interviewed over 50 people, representing all parties, communities, and interests. While those conversations were proceeding, the All-India Congress Committee, on the 10th of October, passed a resolution repeating the demand of the Working Committee for a statement by His Majesty's Government of their war aims and peace aims. They demanded also that India should be declared an independent nation and that present application of this status should be given to the largest possible extent.

I reported my conversations in detail to His Majesty's Government who at a time of overwhelming pressure have been devoting the closest attention to the problems of India. It was in the light of profound consideration and long discussion that on the 18th October I made a declaration on behalf of His Majesty's Government. That declaration emphasized first that Dominion Status remained the goal for India; second, that His Majesty's Government were prepared to reconsider the scheme of the present Act at the end of the war in consultation with leaders of opinion in India; third, that His Majesty's Government attached importance to associating public opinion in India with the prosecution of the war, and that for that purpose they contemplated the formation of a Consultative Group the details of which were to be settled after I had further consulted with party leaders.

The announcements in my statement are of great importance. Their importance has been belittled, but they represent points of real substance. The debates in Parliament which followed the publication of my statement brought out another important point—the readiness of His Majesty's Government if certain conditions were secured, to associate Indian opinion in a still closer and more responsible manner with the conduct of the war by a temporary expansion of the Governor-General's Executive Council. But the reception in British India both of my declaration and of the subsequent debates in Parliament was, so far as the Congress was concerned, definitely hostile. The Congress Working Committee on the 26th of October passed a resolution to the effect that my declaration was entirely unsatisfactory, and called upon the Congress Ministries in the Provinces to resign. The Muslim League on the same day asked that certain doubts should be removed, and complete clarification of the declarations secured, subject to which

they empowered their president, if fully satisfied, "to give an assurance of co-operation and support on behalf of the Mussalmans of India to the British Government for the purpose of prosecution of the war."

I next invited Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Mr. Jinnah to come to see me on November 1, and we discussed the whole position with them frankly. I had already in my previous conversations discussed with them, as with almost all my visitors, from various aspects the possibility of an expansion of the Governor-General's Council. I now told them that if in regard to association at the centre, we had been unable to go further than the Consultative Group it was because of the lack of prior agreement between the major communities such as would contribute to harmonious working in the centre. I added that the manifestoes issued on 22nd October by the Congress Working Committee and the Muslim League had shown only too clearly the gulf that existed between the attitude of these two great parties.

I begged my visitors in these circumstances to meet and to have discussions among themselves on the Provincial position, with a view thereafter to putting forward in agreement proposals which could be considered for some expansion of the Governor-General's Council at the Centre. I told them that I saw no necessity for every detail of the differences between them in the Provinces to be resolved. What was needed was a sufficient resolution of those differences to make the devising of scheme for harmonious cooperation at the Centre practicable. I begged them in the most earnest manner to spare no endeavour to reach agreement; and I emphasised that this was essentially a question affecting Indians on which agreement between Indians themselves was what I was anxious to secure. I repeated the profound anxiety not only of myself but of His Majesty's Government to leave nothing undone which would contribute to achieve that agreement.

The discussions which I suggested have taken place. But the result to me has been a profound disappointment. There remains to-day entire disagreement between the representatives of the major parties on fundamental issues. All I will say now is that I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again, in consultation with the leaders of these great parties and the Princes, to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity. During all the time I have been in India there is nothing I have been more anxious to secure than unity, and unity matters far more to India than is perhaps always realised. Unity, too, means that Indians, whatever their community or whatever their party allegiance, and whether they dwell in British India or in the Indian States, must work together in a common scheme. It is worth a great deal to try to bring that about. I may have been unsuccessful so far but I will try again. And when I try again I would ask India to remember my difficulties, and give me credit for an earnest goodwill and an earnest desire to assist. We are dealing with a problem that has defeated the united endeavours of the greatest organisations in this country. There are grave differences of view which have to be taken into account, which should be bridged. There are strong and deeply-rooted interests which are entitled to the fullest consideration and whose attitude is not a thing lightly to be brushed aside. There are minorities which are great in numbers as well as great in historic importance, and in culture. Those are all factors to which full weight has to be given. But complex as the problems are, I refuse to regard them as insoluble, and I prefer to believe that, like other human problems, they will yield to patient discussion in a spirit of goodwill. In this belief I am encouraged by the friendly feeling which has pervaded my discussions with the leaders of parties. I would ask the country, and I would ask the leaders of the great political parties and their constituents, who I know have faith in those leaders, and are ably led by them, to give me the help which I so much need if there is to be any hope of overcoming our difficulties and reaching the result which I am sure that we all of us desire.

The following correspondence passed between the Congress President and H. E. the Viceroy (see p. 242).

#### Lord Zetland on Failure of Delhi Talks

In the House of Lords, on the 7th. November 1939, Lord Snell asked the Government whether they had any statement to make on the position in India as disclosed by the misunderstanding and correspondence published by the Governor-General which appeared in Monday's newspapers.

Lord Zetland replied, "I am grateful for this opportunity to make some statement."

vations on this matter and the House will, I hope, forgive me if my answer runs to some little length.

I need hardly say that His Majesty's Government share the profound regret of the Governor-General at the failure of the consultations which he had been holding during the last week to produce an agreement between representatives of the Congress on the one hand and the All-India Muslim League on the other. May I remind the House briefly that the previous discussions which the Governor-General had been so patiently conducting for several weeks past had convinced him that there was little, if any, prospect of securing an agreement on plans which he had been considering with the object of bringing Indians into association with the Central Government of India on the conduct of war unless some accommodation could first be reached on the difficulties felt by the Moslems as to their position in the provinces where the Congress Governments were in power.

As the House will have seen from the documents published yesterday that the Congress has definitely refused to consider any concrete plans such as those outlined by the Governor-General, unless His Majesty's Government should be willing first to make a declaration to the effect that India is an independent nation and that His Majesty's Government will raise no opposition to her future form of Government being determined without their intervention by a Constituent Assembly called upon the widest possible basis of franchise and by agreement in regard to communal representation. The Congress have further consistently taken the line which they still maintain that the fact there are racial and religious minorities in India is of no relevance in that connection and that it has always been the intention of the Congress to secure through the constitution to be framed by Indians themselves such protection for their rights as may prove acceptable to the minorities.

His Majesty's Government find it impossible to accept this position. The long standing British connection with India has left His Majesty's Government with obligations towards her which it is impossible for them to shed by disinteresting themselves wholly in the shaping of her future form of Government. Moreover, one outstanding result of the recent discussions in which the Governor-General has been engaged with representatives of all parties and interests in India has been to establish beyond doubt the fact that a declaration in the sense proposed with the summary abandonment by His Majesty's Government of their position in India would be far from acceptable to large sections of Indian population.

But this does not mean that we had in any sense weakened in our determination to assist India by such means as are in our power to reach without avoidable delay the position to the British Commonwealth of Nations to which we are pledged. Let me take this opportunity for removing some doubts and suspicions which appears to have been felt in India about reference in the recent India debate in the House of Commons by Lord Privy Seal to "Dominion Status of 1926" as being the status we contemplate for India. The suggestion, I understand, has been made that the passage of the Status of Westminster in 1931 has produced for the dominions to which the Statute applies a status which is somewhat different from and is superior to the relationship described in the Balfour Declaration contained in the report of Imperial Conference of 1931.

This House at all events will have no difficulty in believing me when I say that there is no foundation for any such suggestion. My Right Honourable friend (Sir Samuel Hoare) referred to Dominion Status of 1926 because it was in that year the Imperial Conference described the status of the dominions and the status so described has not been altered by anything which has since occurred, the statute of Westminster having merely given legal effect to certain consequences of the constitutional position as was then recognised.

It was our hope that the plans which the Governor-General has indicated, including as they did the incorporation of the leaders of the main political parties in India in the Central Government, if they could have been brought into play, would have done much towards facilitating the removal of the outstanding obstacle at present in India's path. The Governor-General has made it clear that he is not deterred by his present failure in hoping for a reconsideration by the parties interested and His Majesty's Government warmly approve the sentiment which he has expressed to be of such service as he can whenever an opportunity occurs.

Meanwhile the position at the moment is that in Bengal, the Punjab and Sind Ministries which in those provinces do not owe allegiance to the Congress party remain in office; in five of the remaining eight provinces where the Congress

Governments have been in power, those Governments have now resigned and in the other three provinces the Governments are expected to resign in the very near future. There appears to be in one province—Assam—the possibility of an alternative government, but with this one exception the Governors have found or will very shortly find themselves with no option since alternative Ministries in a position to command the confidence of the legislature are not forthcoming but to assume to themselves by proclamation powers which the provisions in the Act enable them to assume in such a situation.

Let me make it plain that Section 93 of the Act under which this action has been taken is in no sense a penal provision; it simply provides a machinery the possible necessity for which Parliament in its wisdom foresaw if to quote the words of the Act 'a situation has arisen in which the Government of a province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Act for carrying on the King's Government.'

It is our hope that in the absence of opposition from supporters of the Congress or from other quarters, the Governors with the aid of their official advisers and members of the public services will succeed in conducting smoothly and efficiently the administration of the provinces, the difference being—obviously a fundamental difference—that their actions will be decided in responsibility to this House, to this Parliament; and not in pursuance of advice tendered to them by Ministers responsible to the provincial legislature. We greatly regret that the Ministries which have with so much zeal been carrying on the Government of their great provinces and tackling with energy and resource the many problems with which administration has naturally brought them into contact should have found it necessary to withhold their further services from their country, but we refuse to believe that this withdrawal will be for long and we shall continue to hope, so long as any grounds for such hope remain that, proclamations by the Governors need have only a temporary duration, for I can assure the House that the Governors will be only too ready to recall to their counsels responsible advisers as soon as they are available."

Lord Snell said that he was grateful to Lord Zetland for the statement and added "I am sure that the whole House will share the regret he has expressed that the working arrangements in India have for the time being been suspended. My judgment on the situation after listening to the statement is that some keener effort should be made than the statement foreshadows to keep the door open.

"The declaration as made by the Congress appears, as we hear it, somewhat harsh. We do not know what qualifications there may be behind the written word. I hope we shall not accept this failure as inevitable without trying once, twice, three times to patch up whatever difficulties have arisen. The Congress appears to want to settle the matter without reference to outside influence. In that they may merely dislike official influence being exerted in any conference that may be held. It is possible that unofficial advisers who could interpret the mind and hopes of England might not meet with the same negative response from them.

We cannot in this country compel either agreement or toleration in India but it is quite obvious that the differences that exist there are based upon deep rooted fears or prejudices and we can only encourage every effort made to try to find a solution for the difficulties that have arisen. I believe with Lord Zetland that it would be a tragedy if after the great success which has taken place in Provincial Government, the success which has raised the prestige of India in the world, if because of communal differences the system of Provincial Government should now be suspended. We can only hope a way will be found to enable the parties to continue co-operation in the common service to their country. My last word would be that the statement as I have heard it does not appear to lead to any next step. It rather leaves the situation in the air. I feel that in the circumstances Government might have given a lead by indicating a little more clearly than they have what they propose should be the next. Do they merely propose to sit and wait until things get better or worse or have they any other step to provide the solution which we all hope will be found."

Lord Samuel described Lord Zetland's statement "as one of great clarity and most serious treatment we heard in regard to India for many years past. Regrettable as may be it was particularly deplorable in this particular time of war. The position which has been adopted to meet the present emergency by the Viceroy and Resident Governments are obviously very makeshift and

in the circumstances but they can only be interim methods, as Lord Zetland has explained and while they are in force, as he has told us, the responsibility for the Government of India in the provinces must rest with these Houses of Parliament since it no longer rests with the elected representatives of the people of India. No doubt this House and the House of Commons will in due course have to consider very seriously what steps they can take, if they are able to take any steps in order to promote some form of settlement."

Lord Samuel concluded, "We can only share the hope expressed by the Secretary of State that the present situation will not last for long. We must sympathise with the deep disappointment of the Viceroy. While it is impossible to-day after first hearing the statement to enter fully into these matters, I have no doubt the House will desire at no distant date to undertake a further review of the situation."

#### Debate in the House of Commons

In the House of Commons *Sir Hugh Oneill* read a summarised version of Lord Zetland's statement in the House of Lords and *Mr. Wedgwood Benn* asked, "in the first place is it possible by further discussion with the Congress to overcome the difficulty about the scope and constitution of the Constituent Assembly at the end of the war; and secondly, do Government fully realise what a serious and almost impossible responsibility it is to lay upon this House to undertake support or criticism of a Governor who is attempting to carry on in these difficult circumstances the business of his province."

*Sir Hugh Oneill* replied "I am sure the Viceroy will only be too glad to help whether as regards such an assembly or such conference as the Right Hon'ble gentleman has indicated in any way in which he thinks there is anything like a chance that agreement could be reached in this difficult situation."

*Mr. Grahamwhite* asked: "Have the Government of India and the Secretary of State had an opportunity of considering the proposals in detail—proposals by the Congress party for the Assembly?"

*Sir Hugh Oneill*: "No."

*Mr. Grahamwhite*: "Would it not be possible to ask that these details should be furnished so that they might be considered?"

*Sir Hugh Oneill*: "I think the position that the Congress leaders have taken up so far is that they do not feel able to enter into any such discussions unless Government will as a preliminary give a declaration in the sense they desire."

*Mr. Wedgwood Benn*: "Is there really so much difference between the statement of the Congress and the real interpretation of the Act of 1926?"

"Is it not possible by discussion with Congress so to proceed within the ambit of that policy of this House that their desires might be met?"

*Sir Hugh Oneill*: "I think that Mr. Benn will have gathered from my original reply that the Viceroy is only too anxious to keep the door open to any discussion."

*Mr. D. Grenfell*: "Are we to understand from the statement that Government are not deterred by the failure of the negotiations and that Government themselves may assume the initiative in reopening the negotiations on a new basis?"

*Sir Hugh Oneill*: "The Viceroy has already said he would be only too glad to discuss the matter with representatives of the Congress and also with the minorities if he can see any chance of an agreement."

#### Comments on the Viceregal Statement on Delhi Talks

##### MAHATMA GANDHI'S STATEMENT

The following is Mahatma Gandhi's Statement dated the 9th. November 1939:—  
I have read with respectful attention His Excellency the Viceroy's broadcast and his introductory remarks on the correspondence between himself and Shri Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah Sahab released by His Excellency. I welcome His Excellency's refusal to accept defeat and his determination to solve what seems to have become insoluble. I share to the fullest extent His Excellency's anxiety to reach a solution. Without, therefore, waiting for the Congress reaction to these two declarations and purely for the sake of assisting the common cause, I would like to suggest that no solution is possible unless an acceptable declaration of war aims about India is forthcoming. The pronouncements hitherto made, whether here or in Great Britain, are after the old style, suspected and discredited by Indian-loving India. If Imperialism is dead, there must be a clear break with the past. Language suited to the new era has to be used. If the time has not yet come for the acceptance of this fundamental truth, I would urge that further effort at reaching a



solution should be suspended. In this connection I would remind British statesmen that what is wanted is a declaration of Britain's intention regarding her Indian policy irrespective of India's wishes. A slave-holder, who has decided to abolish slavery, does not consult his slaves whether they desire freedom or not.

Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of seesaw will cease. The minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well-nigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as a dependency. And patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of war, I had hoped and still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain realising that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

Believing as I do in the Viceroy's sincerity I would urge fellow-workers not to lose patience. There can be no civil resistance so long as, first, the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, secondly, the Muslim League blocks the way, and, thirdly, there is indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks.

The second condition should not offend Muslim friends. So long as there is no workable arrangement with the Muslim League, civil resistance must involve resistance against the League. No Congressman can be party to it. I observe that my note in *Harjan* has shocked Jinnah Saheb. I am sorry for it. But at this stage I would not defend myself. I do not want to mar in any way the negotiations between him and Pandit Nehru which I hope will be resumed soon and pray will lead to communal peace.

Since making the above statement I have read the report of the further statement of the Secretary of State in the House of Lords yesterday. It leaves the main position unchanged.

#### Statement by the Congress President

I have read the Viceroy's statement published along with the correspondence that passed between him and Mr. Jinnah and myself. He seems to give an impression that the British Government are unable to comply with our request for a clear declaration of India's status as a free country on account of our differences. The fact is that the British Government is not prepared to promise that it will accept and give legal effect to any constitution which the Indians, including all real minorities, would prepare and in which the safeguards for the protection of minorities will be included. We made a public demand for such a promise and I cannot understand what objections the British Government can have to this on the score of our differences with the minorities. If we are unable to produce a constitution satisfactory to all, the British Government will be free from all blame and the responsibility will be entirely of the Indians. The minorities which are really for attaining the freedom of India can have no reasonable objection as the proposed constitution will not be produced without cooperation of all.

The real difficulty is not communal, but political. The British Government are not yet prepared to concede the right of self-determination to India in practice, however much it may proclaim it in theory to the world. "We put its professions to acid test. Let us have a right to frame our own constitution and we shall do it. We failed in the past in assisting the British Government to frame a constitution for us. But helping the British Government to frame a constitution for India is something very different from independently framing a constitution for ourselves with certainty that the constitution will be accepted and enforced. Our right is that instead of adopting this straight course and throwing the responsibility upon the Indians to frame a constitution with necessary and sufficient

tory safeguards for the protection of the minorities and thus showing its own bonafides beyond doubt and cavil, the British Government befogged the main and moral issue by asking us to settle our differences without telling us at the same time that the result of such a settlement will be a free constitution for the country. It was for this reason that we felt compelled to concentrate on political issues and to refuse to consider the proposal for the expansion of the viceroy's Executive Council before the question of India's status as a free country with full right to self-determination is settled to our satisfaction.

The two princip organisations of which the Viceroy made reference in his statement, the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League both declared that they aim at the independence for India and so far as I know there is no party or group in India which does not want full powers for India to manage her own affairs by whatever name or expression that freedom may be called or described. There is this fundamental unity in all parties in India and this is a universal urge of all Indians which the Congress embodied in its demand for a clear declaration.

The resolution of the Muslim League is equally clear that it does not accept the Viceroy's announcement and insists upon the clarification of the same and consideration denovo of the question of Indian constitution. How then does any communal difference stand in the way of clear recognition and declaration of the status as a free country? Whatever differences there are relate not to India's but to certain other subsidiary matters which we are prepared to settle ourselves. Our proposed talks with Mr. Jinnah will relate not to this fundamental position, but other subsidiary matters. The Congress has been insisting on, "constructive programme an essential element of which" as Mr. Jinnah recognises "is communal unity". We propose to do our best to achieve the success of this essential programme, but the fact that we are still engaged in this most urgent work should not stand in the way of a clear declaration of the kind demanded by us. All points of principle and detail for safeguarding the rights of the minorities have to be left out to be settled by Indians themselves, which they will do to the satisfaction of all if once the British Government proves its own bonafides by ceasing to meddle in our domestic affairs.

#### Pandit Nehru's Statement

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru* issued the following statement to the Press:—

The Viceroy's statement issued last night has spirited me as it conveys an entirely different impression of what transpired in Delhi from what I had gathered from contact with some of the principal parties concerned. From his statement it would appear that the question to be considered was a communal one and he adds that "there remains to-day entire disagreement between representatives of the major political parties on fundamental issues."

This seems to me an entire misapprehension of the situation and I am not aware of any such disagreement on fundamental issues. But there is a fundamental disagreement between the Congress and the British Government and it was because of this that the Viceroy's proposals could not be considered by us. The question before us was a political one and as such it was considered by all of us.

It was agreed between Mr. Jinnah and me that the communal question should be discussed fully by us at an early convenient date. This did not affect the Viceroy's proposals so long as the political difficulty was not got over.

Hence it was not discussed in this connection.

The crisis has arisen over a political issue, namely the European war and the declaration of India as a belligerent country. The Congress Working Committee asked for a statement of war aims and how these were going to be applied to India. Subsequently a declaration was made by the British Government, through the Viceroy, and this was considered entirely unsatisfactory. As a result of this, the Congress felt that it could not associate itself with the war and called upon Congress Governments to resign.

These resignations were offered and in some cases have already been accepted. All this had nothing to do with the communal situation.

The Viceroy then suggests that the Congress and the Muslim League should come to an agreement in regard to the provincial field, consistent in which proposals for the centre would be considered. This suggestion, however, suitable at any other time, had no application to the present situation as we had already agreed from the provincial field, because of disagreement with the British Govern-

ment on vital matters of policy. Our withdrawal from the provincial Governments was in no way due to communal conflict.

It was surprising therefore that the Viceroy should forget or ignore the basic issue and take our co-operation with Britain for granted subject to minor changes. As Shri Rajendra Prasad has stated in his letter "both Mahatma Gandhi and I missed at the interview any reference to the main and moral issue raised by the Congress about the clarification of war aims without which it was impossible for the Congress to consider any subsidiary proposal."

It must be remembered that this clarification does not affect the communal problem, and the proposal for a Constituent Assembly, as amplified by Shri Rajendra Prasad, in his interview with and letter to the Viceroy, also overcomes any communal objection. Does the Viceroy imagine that Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League are opposed to such clarification or the declaration of India as a free country? If so, I fear he is very much mistaken. I found, to my pleasure, that in regard to objectives Mr. Jinnah and I had a great deal in common. He did not entirely agree with our approach to the political problem and so we decided to send separate answers to the Viceroy. Our talks removed many misapprehensions and brought us much nearer to each other than we had been for some years past. I am convinced that such difference as exists politically or communally, can be and will be got over. Even during the last week it was not any differences between Mr. Jinnah and us that came in the way, but the fundamental difference between the British Government and us. Let there be no mistake about this. No one stands in the way of an unequivocal declaration of war aims and India's freedom by the British Government except themselves. Till such a satisfactory declaration is made, other issues do not arise, and we cannot associate ourselves in any way with British policy. To drag the communal question in this straight issue is to befog people's minds and divert them into wrong channels.

#### Lord Zetland's Statement in House of Lords

Making a statement in the House of Lords on the 14th. December 1939 Lord Zetland said: In spite of the efforts of German propaganda carried on by broadcasting and such other means, as are open to them, the Princes and the people of India continue to express in no uncertain terms their detestation of the crimes of Nazi Germany against all laws of God and man. The Viceroy's war purposes fund for which no appeal has so far been made either by the Viceroy or by the Governors and which consists therefore of voluntary contributions spontaneously made, amounts now to a sum of £750,000. Among the contributions earmarked by their donors for special purposes Your Lordships may be interested to know of the gift of £7,500 by the Maharaja of Gondal for the dependents of those who were lost in the "Royal Oak". You will have heard already of the munificent gift of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad of £100,000 to the Air Ministry to provide a Hyderabad squadron for aerial warfare. Another special donation is a lakh of rupees by His Highness the Nawab of Rampur for motor ambulances, one only of the number of similar gifts. These are but examples which it would be easy to multiply. Lord Zetland added "for the benefit of German propagandists who spend much time in explaining to the world the miserable plight of the Indian people under the rapacious tyranny of Great Britain I feel moved to add a single example of the feelings of Indian peasantry themselves in the matter. In one district of the Punjab, with a few people of wealth among its residents, the Governor was recently handed a wholly unsolicited gift of rupees seventeen thousand, all in currency notes, to aid in overthrowing Nazi Germany. Such things speak for themselves. I make a free gift of this item of information to the German gentleman known as Lord Haw Haw for inclusion in his next broadcast. A number of Princes have not been content to limit their financial assistance to lump sums of money, but are contributing percentages of their incomes for the period of war. Some of them, with great fighting traditions behind them, have placed their forces at the disposal of His Majesty and have shown keen anxiety themselves to play part in the actual field to battle; a gesture, which is greatly appreciated by His Majesty's Government, even if it is not possible in the present circumstances to take advantage of their desires in this regard. Offers of additional battalions of troops over and above the State earmarked units have been made by His Highnesses of Kashmir and Bikaner. Similarly among martial races, particularly in the Punjab there has been a spontaneous and eager desire to enlist in the armed forces of the Crown. In the political field I repeat to say that difficulties with which your Lordships are familiar exist in the Punjab and in the Bengal and in the Sind the

Governments and legislatures are functioning normally and with success. In Assam, where the Ministry under a Congress Prime Minister resigned, an alternative Government under Sir Syed Muhammad Saadulla, a former Prime Minister has accepted office; but in the remaining seven provinces in which the Congress Ministries were in office, the administration has been taken over by the Governors with the result that wholly contrary to our desires the hands of the clock have been put back thirty years to before the days of the Minto-Morley constitution. I should add for the information of your lordships that the transition has been effected smoothly; that there has been no reversal of policy in any important respect and that, broadly speaking, the measures promoted by the Ministries and assented to by the Legislatures before they resigned, are being given effect to by the Governor. Since I last addressed your lordships on the matter there has been a further meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress and a further statement of their position. There is a sentence contained in it, which I warmly welcome; it runs as follows—"it is inherent in every form of Satyagraha"—that is to say passive resistance—"that no effort is spared to achieve an honourable settlement with an opponent." That I need hardly say is what we ourselves most earnestly desire.

What then, you may ask, stands in the way? Not the least of the obstacles is difference of opinion between the Congress and the Moslem League as to the relations of the Congress and what for want of better term are described compendiously as minorities. The nature of this difference is well illustrated by another sentence in the most recent statement by the Congress Working Committee, which runs as follows—"The Committee wish to declare that no communal considerations arise in meeting the demands of the Congress." I am sure they are sincere in holding that belief; nevertheless, it is one which His Majesty's Government are unable to share. In their view no constitution could be expected to function successfully, which did not meet with the general assent of the minorities, who had to live under it. I am not, of course, in any way, intending to minimise the importance of such sections of the population as the scheduled castes, or indeed, of any other minority, when I say that by far the most important of the so-called minority communities are the Moslems. I am well aware that I need hardly say that there are Moslems to be found in the ranks of the Congress. Yet the fact remains that of the four hundred eighty-two Moslems elected to the lower Chambers of the Provincial Legislatures at the last general election only 28 stood as Congressmen and Mr. Gandhi himself has stated that the All-India Moslem League is undoubtedly the largest organisation representing Moslems, though he also speaks of Moslem bodies, which deny its claim to represent them.

There is a further consideration to be borne in mind. We speak of Moslems as a minority, because on a purely arithmetical basis they are less in number than the Hindus. But they are a community of from eighty to ninety millions with race memories of days, when for 200 years the Moghul dynasty ruled over a greater part of the Indian sub-continent. They have behind them a tradition of military service, which persists to this day and is exemplified by the high proportion of the Indian army, which they fill. I have recalled these facts because they make it clear that minorities of Europe present us with no full analogy and God knows, minorities of Europe have been a source of sufficient trouble in the world of to-day.

I observe that Mr. Gandhi himself in his paper "*Harjas*" of November 25 speaks of summoning a Constituent Assembly 'subject to safeguards to the satisfaction of minorities'; and he goes on to say—"the expression, satisfaction of minorities, may be regarded as vague. It can be defined beforehand by agreement." We too regard it as essential for constitutional advance by whatever means advance is to be obtained—that assent of minorities should be secured as far as is possible by agreement. But it is not within our power to impose an agreement upon them; that can only be reached by Indians themselves.

It was with a view to promoting discussion to that end between the leaders of the Congress and of the All-India Moslem League that they were invited by the Viceroy, not long since to meet one another.

I would appeal to the leaders of the Congress as the largest and most powerful political organisation in India to endeavour to understand the difficulties which are responsible for the attitude of the All-India Moslem League. How great is the need for such an understanding is shown by the instruction issued a few days ago by the President of the All-India Moslem League to the Moslems throughout India to observe the end of this month as 'Day of Deliverance and Thanksgiving' that the Congress Government ceased to function. I would equally appeal to the President

of the All-India Moslem League to consider the effect of such action upon the relations between the two communities generally and also between the Congress and the All-India Moslem League. Will they not call a truce in order that there may be free and friendly discussion between them with a view to reaching that agreement, of which Mr. Gandhi has written? I derive some little encouragement from the report, which has reached me that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Jinnah have arranged to meet one another for further discussion.

That is all to the good and I venture to hope that they may cover a wide field for I am convinced that so long as the legislatures are divided on communal rather than on political lines so long will serious difficulty be experienced in the working of democratic institutions with success. What we have to aim at is a state of affairs under which the legislator will think of himself as an Indian first and as Hindu or Moslem afterwards. When that has been achieved the greatest stumbling block in the way of India's progress will have been removed.

There are, of course, other matters which have to be taken into account. There is the defence of India, our obligations to the Princes and the position which our own people have built up in India by the enterprise of generations, to mention only some of them. But the supreme problem of the moment is that of minorities and it is for this reason that I confine myself to it this afternoon.

Let me, however, conclude as I began with an assurance to your lordships that, while there are these internal difficulties, they do not lessen the abhorrence with which men of all creeds and communities in India view the Nazi system against which we have taken up arms. I have noticed an attempt on the part of the German propaganda department to propagate the idea that Indians should look to Nazi Germany for their freedom. The conception of 'Hitler the liberator' is so grotesque as to bring a smile to the face of anyone except possibly a German and if Hitler and his associates imagine that they may look for aid from India they are heading for one of the greatest disillusionments of their lives.

#### Pandit Nehru on Zetland's statement

Lord Zetland occupies a high office. But many of his recent utterances can hardly be termed responsible or helpful. I have no desire to discuss his latest speech in any detail. He has raised some novel points and arguments and laid stress on the minorities question specially. No one in India can possibly ignore this question and all of us are obviously desirous of solving it to the satisfaction of the various parties concerned.

How is it to be solved within the context of democracy? Obviously, the fundamental principles governing any consideration of any aspect of the Indian problem are democracy and unity of India. The suggestion put forward by the Congress that all these matters should be decided by a Constituent Assembly meets in principle all the difficulties raised. This does not mean that all our problems are simple of solution or that there will not be complications and difficulties to face. But it does offer not only a suitable method but the only way within the context of democracy. The mass of people by adult suffrage elect their representatives; all the principal minorities are represented and have a voice in the shaping of India's future. In regard to their particular problems it may be said that a minority's rights might be over-ridden by majority vote. That has been got over by the suggestion that such rights should be settled by agreements. If there is no agreement about a specific issue then the only proper course is to refer it to an independent arbitration such as the League of Nations or the International Court at the Hague. Nothing could be fairer than this and no minority can possibly object to it. It avoids the possibility of the majority forcing its will on a minority in regard to the minorities' special rights and interests. It avoids also the absurdity of a minority imposing its will on a majority. The importance of the Constituent Assembly procedure is to get the real opinion of the masses, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc., through their elected representatives. The question does not arise then of who the Congress represents or the Muslim League or any other party. If these organisations command the confidence of the people their nominees will be elected to the Constituent Assembly.

I agree with Lord Zetland that it is a little absurd to consider the Moslems in India as a minority. Not only their great numbers but the fact that in large areas of the country they are in a majority makes it clear that no minority questions really arise. Ordinarily speaking, such numbers warrant no protection as they can well look after their own interests. As a matter of fact, in predominantly Moslem areas like the Punjab, Bengal, Sind, the N. W. F. P. and Baluchistan the minority

ties are non-Muslims and many of them have demanded protection. If India is looked at as a whole these various factors balance one another and prevent misbehaviour of any religious or racial group.

Lord Zetland unfortunately still thinks in terms of a bygone age and has a semi-feudal outlook on life. He does not realise that new forces are convulsing India. Even among the Muslims the mass of the people are claiming their own rights from their upper class and sometimes their semi-feudal leaders. The problems of India are essentially economic though a continuous attempt is made and has again been made by Lord Zetland to make them appear to be racial and minority problems. Lord Zetland possibly still thinks of the Princes of India as the hereditary rulers and of the Rajputs and other classes as the obvious military class. But things are very different in the India of to-day and all the attempt to hide the real issues cannot last long in this dynamic situation.

I can well understand the opposition of the British Government to the idea of the Constituent Assembly because such an Assembly necessarily puts an end to British Imperialism. Between the position of Indian nationalism and that of British imperialism there is no common factor. If the British Government is unable to agree to India determining her future we are equally unable to agree to the British Government interfering in any way in such a decision. We agree to differ and the future will decide whose will prevails. There is no other way of having a free constitution to India and every other method involves a measure of dictation from abroad. The alternatives are, as previously stated, continuation of British domination and the development, sporadically or otherwise, of Sovietism in India. I do not know how the mass of Indian people will decide in the particular matter but I am prepared to leave it to them and take the risk. The days of small groups at the top deciding the fate of India cannot last.

#### Shri C. Rajagopalachariar's Reply to Lord Zetland

It is difficult to believe that with such ability of understanding as the Secretary of State undoubtedly possesses, he could have missed otherwise than deliberately the principal point in Gandhiji's plea. Gandhiji asks for British help in the settlement of what has been called the communal differences, by terminating what he has called the 'see-saw' process which prevents settlement. He has asked that Britain should not remain uncommitted but should decide once for all that the question of the constitution of India be remitted to a duly elected Indian Assembly of representatives of all communities, it being understood that the interests of minorities should be safeguarded as far as possible by agreement rather than by majority vote. The Secretary of State pleads that it is not within his power to impose an agreement and that it could only be reached by Indians themselves.

This is just what Gandhiji wants to be allowed to be done, but it cannot be done if Britain refuses to commit herself in any way but contents herself by asking the majority to make up with a minority, who, therefore, feel no call to be reasonable. Referring to Gandhiji's suggestion that a Constituent Assembly should be summoned subject to safeguards to the satisfaction of minorities, Lord Zetland says that the British Government also regard it as essential for constitutional advance, 'by whatever means it is to be obtained,' that the assent of the minorities should be secured. The means makes all the difference for getting the assent of the minorities. The Secretary of State wants an agreement beforehand to be reached by party organisations and hesitates to agree to convene an assembly of elected representatives with an instruction to come to an agreement which shall be final and binding. essential For some reason or other the British Government turn the blind eye to the point. I am glad that the Secretary of State has made it clear that so long as the legislatures are divided on communal rather than on political lines, so long will serious difficulties be experienced in the working of democratic institutions with success. I hope that this observation which confirms the definite conclusion of the British Government in 1935 does not merely convey an explanation for refusing to go forward, but indicates a definite policy on the part of the British Government to foster nationalism as distinguished from the encouragement of communal divisions. It is heartening to read that the Secretary of State warmly welcomes the statement of the Congress Working Committee that before any Satyagraha is undertaken no effort would be spared to achieve an honourable settlement. He says that this was also the British Government's most earnest desire. Let us hope that they are examining, therefore, the demand made for a definite commission to a duly elected official body of representatives of the people of India to frame their own constitution.

# **Educational Progress in India**

**JULY—DECEMBER 1939**

# All India Educational Conference

Fifteenth Session—Lucknow—27th. to 30th. December 1939

## THE WELCOME ADDRESS

The fifteenth session of the All-India Educational Conference commenced on the 27th. December 1939 in the Baradari Hall, Lucknow which was packed to overflowing with about five hundred delegates from all parts of the country and distinguished educationists and others. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Conference.

It was impossible to displace English for sometime to come because of its unifying value to India, declared Dr. *Rai Rajeshwar Bali*, Chairman of the Reception Committee. Dr. Bali regretted that the first really popular Governments had resigned in a majority of the provinces. He said that whatever might be the short-comings of the Government of India Act, for the first time, the new Governments had full and unfettered scope to formulate and carry out national policies in educational matters. He hoped that, before long, the popular Governments would come back to office, and take the fullest advantage of these opportunities. The most pressing educational problem, Dr. Bali said, was the colossal waste of money, time and energy involved in the present educational system. He emphasised that they had to rouse the peasant from his stupor and give him the light of literacy. While recognising that a lingua franca was essential in the larger national interests, Dr. Bali pointed out that no province could afford to lose its provincial language. It was impossible, he observed, to displace the English language for sometime to come, for none would dispute its unifying value to India, or deny that it enabled them to maintain contact with world movements. However, it was for the Conference to tackle this problem and to assign to various claimants their proper place in the scheme of national education. He strongly pleaded for the adoption of measures to stop educational wastage. Dr. Bali then proposed Sir S. Radhakrishnan to the chair, and expressed gratification at having a scholar of such international repute to guide their deliberations.

Mr. *P. Seshadri* associated himself with the welcome extended by Rai Rajeshwar Bali on behalf not only of the numerous teaching organisations represented at the Conference, but also of the entire teaching profession of India. The All-India Federation of Educational Associations, he mentioned, kept itself out of politics, but he wished to assure the political leaders that it had always been the aim of the Federation to train the students to be worthy citizens of their Motherland. He emphasised that there could be no political advance in this country unless there was a happy and contented teaching profession.

## PT. NEHRU'S OPENING SPEECH

Inaugurating the Conference, Pt. *Jawaharlal Nehru* said that he felt honoured that a body of learned men should have summoned him to their select gathering. He felt attracted by their invitation. For, what was there more attractive and vital to-day, than education?

Their objective in education was to train the rising generation for life. The idea of education had long been the improvement of the individual. But even that care of the individual must to-day be considered in terms of the mass of the people, or else the enlightened individual would be submerged in the unenlightened mass. "Can an individual", he asked, "truly advance, except in the rarest cases, if the environment that surrounds him is pulling him back all the time? This environment consists of inherited ideas, prejudices and superstitions which restrict the mind and prevent growth and change in a changing world."

Pt. *Nehru* made a strong plea for changing the environment. These were larger problems which could not come up before the Conference, and yet they affected education vitally, and all our educational efforts would be in vain if these problems do not find proper and early solution. All education, he stressed, must have a definite social outlook and must train our youth for the kind of society we wish to have. Pt. *Nehru* deplored the present-day social fabric, which was a decadent and dying thing. It must give place to an order where they could think in terms, not of individual profit, but of the common good; where individuals co-operate with each other and nations, and peoples worked in co-operation for human



advancement; where human values counted for more. If this was the accepted ideal of our future society, then all our education must be fashioned to that end, and must not pay homage to anything that was against this conception of social order. Recently, observed Pt. Nehru, much thought had been given in India to educational progress and people's minds were astir and expectant. The Conference, he hoped, would consider the new Basis scheme of education. The more he studied it and watched it grow, the more fascinated he had been with it. Further experience would, no doubt, bring changes and variations, but he had little doubt that it was particularly suited to a poor country like India.

Pt. Nehru dealt at length with the condition of the "millions of unhappy, hollow-laden people with sunken eyes and hopeless look." Yet he had always sensed the tremendous vitality of our people, and felt confident that they would pull themselves out of his miserable condition, and recover the bright and happy and hopeful eyes that should be the birth-right of every individual.

Concluding Pt. Nehru said that it was pleasant for intellectual and enlightened people to discuss calmly the affairs of a troubled and distant world; but the troubled world was no longer distant, but threatened to envelop and overwhelm them. "The world is unpleasant; let us realise it and then, like men, seek to change it and make it a pleasanter, juster place for all of us to live in."

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The need for a national scheme of education in India, a scheme for the entire nation in all its stages, was stressed by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in his presidential address. It was not a matter for controversy, he said. Every progressive country in the world made provision for such a plan.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan said that the poverty and backwardness of our country and the incidence of political subjection were responsible for the widespread illiteracy of our population and the limitation of our higher and technical education. With the slow transfer of responsibility to the leaders of the people the question of education was assuming more importance, and the object of the conference was to deliberate and frame proposals for the consideration of those in power.

The different countries were provinces of a common Republic of Culture. There was no such thing as Proletarian Mathematics, or Nazi Chemistry or Jewish Physics. Science was cosmopolitan in its essence and reality; its range and area were universal and not partisan or national. In education, they were the same. But, pointed out Sir S. Radhakrishnan, it was quite possible to impart through education a definite bias for developing a particular type of human individual, as in the case of the Nazis, Fascists, Bolsheviks and British, to fit into particular social schemes. "The melancholy spectacle of the world to-day, with its dementia of national hatreds and the cynical savagery with which nation is turned against nation and millions of young men are ready to kill and get killed, shows the utter folly of this mis-education. When we are told that we are English, German, Hindu or Muslim, we do not cease to be human beings."

"Nationalism," declared Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "whatever may have been its justifications in times gone by, is to-day a dying creed."

The development of rapid means of communication, said Sir S. Radhakrishnan, and the changes effected by the Industrial Revolution required them to look upon the world as a single unit and make a real community of men possible.

The tragedies of the world to-day, he continued, were due to the persistence of old habits of living in a new world where they had no meaning. What they had to fight against to-day was "a sick, acquisitive society with its uncoordinated economic enterprise and unjust social order, where the pride and the prosperity of a few are built upon the shame and subjection of the many and an unjust international order which acquiesces in the degradation of many nations."

Sir S. Radhakrishnan said that "in the past, nationalism was a natural necessity and provided scope for the political, social and imaginative life of the people. India has its geography relating to the land which she occupies and a history dealing with the tribunes by which she lives. There are certain things without which we cannot live, and certain values without which we do not care to live. These values determine the life of the country more than heat and cold, more than the rivers and mountains. India symbolises a spirit, a character, a temperament, a destiny. She is not a racial identity nor does she embody religious unity. But here is that attitude of mind, which stands for the reality of the Unseen and the call of the Spirit. This spiritual pattern has affected all those who have made India their

home. According to this ideal, the aim of education", Sir S. Radhakrishnan proceeded, "is the freedom of the individual, the freedom to think and to adore, to dream and to meditate. Life manifests itself in the individual. He enjoys the thrills of his victories and suffers the anguish of his failures. In a civilised society the individual must be able to practise his natural virtues of body, mind and spirit. To serve and protect human creativeness is the end of all education. Our education has been more or less academic, and we are trying to remould it in a more practical way. "Widespread Basic Education requires teachers in arts and crafts and leaders of science and industry, which only a university can provide.

"The charter of Hinduism, '*Tat Twam Asi*', the Christian gospel of love and the Islamic concept of brotherhood make out that the fight for freedom and the development of the human personality cannot cease so long as the human soul is what it is. There are no permanent obstacles to mutual understanding of different people, nothing to render their spirit incommunicable. The great function of our educational institutions is to develop and increase the sense of mutual understanding and confidence.

"The story of mankind, the drama of his progress from chaos, disorder and barbarism to order, peace and humanity is a most thrilling one. The life of man, with its endless varieties of form and spirit, and the different ways in which human nature seems to express itself, its ambitions and adventures, its failures and opportunities through all of which the unconquerable spirit of man, hoping, failing, striving, but gaining ground, generation after generation, never giving up the forward struggle, is a witness to the creative spirit of man. Let us hold fast to the anchor, however much the winds may change, and the tides ebb and flow."

Resolutions—Lucknow—30th. December 1939

#### WARDHA SCHEME ACCEPTED

The sectional meetings of the Conference was held from day to day till the 30th. December, when one of the most important decisions of the Conference was the acceptance of the Wardha scheme of education, though in a modified form. The following resolution was passed :—

"This Conference recommends to the Government of India, the National Planning Committee and the Provincial and State Governments to adopt the scheme of national education prepared by the National Education Scheme Committee of the All-India Federation of Educational Associations and approved by its Council, with the following modifications :—

(1) That the stages of national education should be designed (1) pre-school education ; (2) basic or primary education ; (3) secondary education and (4) university education ; and should comprise courses for (2) (3) and (4) of seven years, four years and three years respectively ;

(2) That the age of commencement of the basic or primary course should not be less than six years in any case ;

(3) That the pre-school course should be for pupils below six or seven years as the case may be ; and

(4) That provision should be made for the following courses also in secondary schools in addition to the courses already recommended : (1) general and teachers' training and (2) general and pre-medical.

Principal Seshadri declared that his ambition was to see a teachers' organisation in India which would be as formidable as similar organisations in England or America. He said that the teachers' trust should be discharged with honour and dignity. Teachers should acquire the quality of leadership. He proposed to devote himself to the cause of education after he had retired from active work.

The session of the Conference then concluded.

# All India Muslim Educational Conference

Fifty-second Session—Calcutta—29th. to 31st. December 1939

## THE WELCOME ADDRESS

The fifty-second annual All-India Muslim Educational Conference began its three-day session at Mohamed Ali Park, Calcutta on the 29th. December 1939 under the presidentship of Nawab Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur, of Hyderabad. The meeting opened with a recitation from the Holy Quoran and the singing of the Moslem National Anthem of Sir Mahomed Iqbal.

Welcoming the delegates, the hon. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, Chief Minister of Bengal, Chairman of the Reception Committee, surveyed the educational progress and achievements of the community since 1886, when the Conference was founded by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The part played by the Aligarh Movement in national regeneration was, he said, eminently great and glorious. It was perhaps the most successful organised national achievement of renaissance Muslim India. Had there been no Aligarh, Mr. Fazlul Huq added, there would have been no Muslim League and no Modern Muslim India as an independent cultural unit in the body politic of this country. Mr. Huq observed that the need for the All-India Muslim Educational Conference in Modern India was never greater than to-day to safeguard the cultural unity and educational progress of the community as a whole. He strongly pleaded for the ideal of cultural autonomy and educational freedom of Indian Muslims.

Criticising the Wardha Scheme, Mr. Huq said, "Mr. Gandhi is the real author of the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. Every Muslim as a Muslim is a supporter of the ideal of universal primary education, but the Wardha Scheme is not the last word on the subject. I fully and frankly criticised the scheme in my presidential address delivered last year at the Patna session of this conference. I still stick to my view. Wardha is being converted into the centre of a new religion or philosophy of life, and the Wardha Scheme into its cultural vehicle, just as the Congress has been turned into its political machine. By refusing to provide for the religious education of Muslim boys and girls as an integral part of the school course and at the same time basing the entire education and its ideal on the Gandhian teachings of Ahimsa dharma and satyagraha dharmas, and the inculcation of the idea that no religion is better than another, the supporters of the Wardha Scheme seek to de-Islamise Muslim boys and girls in the most important and formative period of their intellectual lives. I want to declare from this platform that as long as Muslims are true to Islam, they will resist this plan of denationalising Muslims. The Muslims will not tolerate any scheme or plan, of which religious teaching and Islamic traditions are not the basis, and the language and medium of which has not been fully and freely approved by the committee and in the actual administration and working of which the Muslims have not secured effective representation. The Muslims will never barter away their cultural autonomy, educational freedom and religious independence for any system of free education which is calculated to undermine the foundations of their nationality."

Mr. Muhammad Habibur Rahman Khan Sherwani, honorary secretary of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference, Aligarh, proposed Nawab Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur to the chair.

Seconding the motion, the hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister, Bengal Government said: "If there is one thing which the Muslim community craves it is education and still more education. From our very childhood, we have imbibed the doctrine that it is the duty of Muslims not only to be educated themselves, but to educate others. Under these circumstances, it is a tragedy so far as the Muslims are concerned that they have not got those facilities for education for which they crave. The All-India Muslim Educational Conference merely translates that burning desire for education into action, and provides the medium for those who are desirous of taking part in the movement for better and universal education. We know to what extent the Muslims of Bengal are anxious to get educated and to educate their children, and to forego many rights and claims if this can be secured for them. But the education must be one that proceeds on right lines, viz. an education which will be based on their religion, the moral discipline inculcated by Islam, and on their culture and their history and which will inspire them with

the ideals for which Muslim religion stands. In Nawab Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur we have a great patron of learning and of education, and it is fit and proper that he should be chosen to guide this conference in its deliberations when the educative necessities of the Muslims of India are becoming more and more insistent."

#### THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*Nawab Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur*, in his presidential address suggested that a small committee should be entrusted with the task of framing a scheme of Muslim education and offered to bear the committee's expenses himself.

Making a general survey of education in India, the President said that the last two-and-a-half years had shown that in the provincial legislatures a majority party could easily be formed from a single religious community, and that, if it so pleased it could swamp the entire province with its own culture, born of its religion. "I know full well," he continued, that the Muslims, as a community, are not satisfied with the schemes of education which have, of late, pressed themselves on their attention from diverse quarters. Of one thing however, I am certain, that in the days which face us, no system of education will command our approval which neglects to develop in us all those qualities, intellectual, spiritual and moral, which distinguish us as custodians of the spirit and culture of Islam, which has a mission of its own to fulfil for the uplift of mankind,

"There are two primary objectives which every system of education for the Moslems should attempt to achieve—firstly, the preservation of the distinguishing features of Moslem culture; and secondly, the consolidation of the Muslim social order." The President suggested that a small committee, of perhaps three members, should tour the country, consulting local educational and economic experts at each centre, and frame a scheme of education based on the knowledge gained from these consultations. "It should be the concern of this committee," he said, "to determine to what extent and in what particular subjects of study a common syllabus for all, Muslims and non-Muslims, is permissible, and in what subjects an autonomous provision for the Muslims would be needed. It should also be the task of the committee to suggest what statutory machinery would be needed to guarantee the satisfactory working of such provision.

In conclusion, the President appealed for the re-adoption of "the great institution of Zakat," which was at present miserably neglected. It they could but act up to this fundamental tenet of Islam, the problem of financing schemes for the educational and economic uplift of the Muslim masses would be easily solved.

#### Islamic Ideal & Nationalism

The contribution of Islam to the growth and development of nationalism in the world was dealt with at length by the hon. Mr. *Azizul Haque*, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University and speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, presiding over the Islamic Culture section of the Conference in the afternoon.

Islam, he said, did not accept nationalism as the final evolution in the history of man. An international outlook had ever been the ultimate ideal in Islam. Yet, nationalism had always been accepted as the immediate objective. He declared that every Muslim was a patriot to his *father* breath. They claimed India as the land of their birth, even though there were people who would not hesitate to treat them as guests and foreigners. They were Indians and children of the soil, as much as any one else.

The recognition and vindication of the principle of equality had been the very fundamental characteristic of Islamic ideal and outlook, observed Mr. Haque. From its very inception, Islam had been a great democratising process, and Islam and its Prophet preached the principles of equality and democracy as the basis of human relationship.

To-day, democracy might have been temporarily eclipsed in some countries of the world, but the day was not far off when democracy would once again break through the clouds. When that day came, it was the spirit of Islam which would come to the rescue of an aggrieved world.

Mr. *Azizul Haque* added that in that scheme of human affairs, there was no place for the steam-roller type of democracy which did not take into consideration, the cultural, political and social rights of the minorities. Islam stood for justice, equality and fairness for all, and so each any form of government, democratic or otherwise, which did not adequately and effectively guarantee these fundamental rights to the minorities had no place in Islamic thought.

## RESOLUTIONS

The Conference passed a resolution requesting the authorities of the various universities in India to establish a department of Islamic History and Culture, and appreciating the efforts by the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University to establish such a department in the University of Calcutta.

Prof. *Haroon Khan Sherwani*, of Osmania University, in moving the resolution, said that it was strange that, although the Indian universities had to cater for the needs of both Muslims and non-Muslims inhabiting their provinces, some of them had not taken any heed of the necessity for teaching the history of Islam and Islamic Culture.

By a resolution moved by Dr. *Abdul Aziz Puri*, of Aligarh University, the Conference congratulated the Government of Bengal on having included Islamic History and Islamic Philosophy among the subjects for competitive examinations and requested the Government of India and other Provincial Governments to include these subjects in their respective competitive examinations.

## Resolutions—Second Day—Calcutta—30th. December 1939

The second days session of the Conference commenced this morning with Sir *Muhammad Saadulla*, Premier of Assam, in the chair. In his presidential address, Sir *Muhammad Saadulla* urged the spread of education and advised the audience not to forget the influence of environment. In other words, in a place where agriculturists predominated, agriculture should form part of their curriculum. The last factor in the spread of education, from the speaker's personal experience in Assam, was that there should be a large number of Muslim teachers in schools so that the would-be student might be encouraged and induced to take to higher education.

## UNIVERSITY FOR FRONTIER

The Conference passed a number of resolutions, by one of which it requested the Governments of India and the North-West Frontier Province to establish a university in the Frontier Province in view of the special needs of the people of that province.

The Conference also resolved that in view of the educational backwardness of the Muslims of Bengal, the Government of Bengal be requested to provide adequate facilities and finances for the purpose of encouraging talented young Muslims in the prosecution of their higher and technical education in India and abroad.

The Conference regretted that no provision had been made in the province of Bengal for free and primary education upto this time and it requested the Government of Bengal to make arrangements for the same at an early date.

Lastly the Conference recommended to the Government that in rural areas agriculture should form part of the school curriculum and in urban areas handicraft should be included in the general curriculum.

Addressing the Conference on "Our Educational Ideal", Mr. *Mashar Ali* said that the scheme of education should be a comprehensive one covering every phase of Muslim activity from the cradle to the grave. By this he meant that the educational part of their life, their professional life and their public life should all be controlled by a scheme which should make life complete.

## WARDHA SCHEME CRITICISED

The Wardha scheme of education came in for much criticism when the Conference assembled for the night session under the Chairmanship of Nawab *Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur*. *Nawab Sardar Yar Jung Bahadur*, General Secretary of the Conference, moved a resolution disapproving of the Wardha scheme and suggesting the appointment of a small committee with Nawab *Kamal Yar Jung Bahadur* as Chairman to formulate a comprehensive scheme of education which would suit the requirements of Muslims in the various provinces. The committee will tour the provinces, consult local educationists and economists and submit its report to the Central Standing Committee for the next annual session of the Conference. Local committees will be appointed in the various provinces to collect materials and data for the information of the committee.

The resolution was supported by Mr. *A. K. Fazlul Haq*, Premier of Bengal.

## EDUCATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN

A strong plea for the propagation of education among Muslim girls and women was made by Dr. *M. Barkat Rahman*, Principal of the *Islamic College, Bombay*, President of the Female Education Section of the Conference in the afternoon.

Dr. Rahman said that under the changing political conditions of India to-day, they had not only to concentrate on producing good mothers, but also good citizens. He added that the schools that had recently been started were mainly instructional institutions; institutions which would prepare women for earning an independent living were also needed.

The Conference was strongly of the opinion that the social and economic needs of the country in general and Muslims in particular demanded that a definite bias be created in favour of the study of domestic science in all stages of girls' education. The Conference, therefore, made the following recommendations to Educational Boards and Universities and Provincial Governments: (A) provision should be made in all girls' schools for teaching domestic science as a compulsory subject for all students; (B) Matriculation courses should be so revised that domestic science might be made compulsory for girls in lieu of a subject less useful to them; (C) students who might wish to prosecute the study of domestic science for the Intermediate or B. A. examinations should be allowed to offer it and provision be made for its study in all colleges.

The Conference recommended to the Government of Bengal that adequate recurring and non-recurring grants be given to all girls' schools to encourage individual enterprise regarding the establishment of schools.

The Conference considered it necessary to start an endowment fund for the purpose of awarding stipends to encourage education among girls. It urged that the Muslims of Bengal should take the necessary action in this matter.

**Resolutions—Third Day—Calcutta—31st. December 1939**

#### PLEA FOR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

The Conference held a short session in the afternoon under the chairmanship of Mr. *Abdul Hasan* of Aligarh. The deliberations related to questions relating to the economic and social reforms for the Muslim community.

The President, in his speech, regretted that Muslims were not taking any interest in commerce and industry but were hankering after Government services. "If we could reform our character and train ourselves we would be able to produce much better citizens in future. The basis on which our social life depends is our relationship with our fellow-being." He advised the people to acquire the habit of honest dealing.

The Conference resolved that apart from education through the medium of books it was necessary that young men should be trained in industry and handicraft and that efforts should be made to raise funds to that end.

Meeting again at night, the Conference passed the annual report of the Secretary and concluded at midnight.

## The Convocation Addresses

### S. N. D. Thackersey Women's University

The following is the text of the Convocation Address delivered by the Hon'ble Mr. *B. G. Kher*, Premier and Minister of Education to the Government of Bombay, delivered on the 1st. July 1939, at the Shreeamati Mathabai Damodhar Thackersey Indian Women's University, Bombay :—

Reverend Mahatmaji, Mr. Chancellor, Members of the Senate, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When some days ago Lady Thackersey invited me to deliver an address to you on the Convocation Day, she told me that it was Mahatmaji's wish that I should do so and also that I should speak to you in Gujarati. Entertaining the great regard which I do both for Mahatmaji and for this University, I could not refuse what was almost a command, nor did I wish to do so. I am, however, painfully conscious of the fact that I am not worthy of the high honour you have conferred upon me, and I cannot offer you such rich fare as has been provided on these occasions in the past.

My first duty is to congratulate you on the excellent progress which you have

made during the year which has just closed. The Bombay College and the Kanyashala show a steady increase in the number of pupils and the results have been satisfactory. If you will be able to start a hostel, I am sure there will be a still greater increase in the number of the students. The total number of students studying in your affiliated schools also shows an increase of nearly 200 which is a matter for satisfaction. I must also congratulate you upon the fact that your graduates have now obtained from the Government of Bombay recognition of their merit on the same footing as those of the Bombay University. I must know that neither the intrinsic value of a person nor his usefulness to society depends upon the esteem in which he is held by what we call the world. It is true that "rank is but the guinea stamp," and yet in a society constituted as ours is to-day, it cannot be denied that the economic factor plays such an important part that national education is only too frequently judged by the money value it can command in the market. I can well appreciate the anxiety of your governing body, therefore, to obtain statutory recognition for your University from Government. I can only express the hope that all the difficulties in your way may soon be removed and that you may be able to obtain recognition in the near future. All that Government can do to help to bring about this end, we shall endeavour to do. As you probably know, with a view to ensuring a high standard of efficiency among your graduates the University authorities have recently appointed a small committee consisting of the representatives of the Bombay Government and the University to suggest modifications in the course of study to suit modern needs and at the same time make the University retain its distinctive features as a women's University. And in order to enable the University to extend its activities, Government have also sanctioned an annual recurring grant of Rs. 5,000 for the University with effect from the current year.

The influence of women is one of the most important factors in social reform. A negative or obstructive attitude on the part of women is bound to be a great hindrance to real progress in any direction. Although a great number of women remain in the domestic sphere, there are some who wish to enter upon a vocational training, and the main point is that whatever their occupations, domestic or other, women must be trained to a more enlightened outlook and their capacities developed so that their collective opinion may be on the side of intelligent progress. It is, therefore, necessary to encourage women's and girls' education and to remove as far as possible the disparity which exists in the education of men and women. It is the policy of the Bombay Government to remove this disparity as fast as possible.

The two distinctive features of your University are (1) that instruction is imparted through the medium of regional languages and not in English as in most other Universities and (2) that the courses of study are so framed as to suit the different roles played by men and women in the social economy of the country. About the first, I can only say that you put into practice twenty-three years ago, what modern educationists almost unanimously agree is necessary and essential. As to the second, I find that many of your past convocation addressees have dwelt at length on the moot question of co-education, on its advantages and disadvantages. I do not propose to do so this evening. It is enough for me to say that I feel that your University fills a distinct need of society, that the merit of its services cannot be fairly judged by the number of your Graduates or the Matriculates who pass from your institutions, but by the aims and ideals for which you stand and the principles which you practise. It is very necessary that we keep these clearly in mind or else we are likely to turn towards a wrong path.

The other day I was reading a book called "Our Freedom and its results" five eminent English women each of whom has contributed a chapter on the changes in public life, changes in law, changes in employment, changes in morality, changes in social life respectively in England. The last two provide food for thought for those who are anxious to introduce all that the West has tried, that goes under the name of progress, into our lives. To have their equal status recognised, to win their freedom, was the objective of the women's movement in England; but now that freedom has been achieved, as Mrs. Hamilton, an ex-M. P. observes, "women are sitting on their heritage of freedom and that in a very large proportion of cases, it means insecurity, anxiety and unemployment." Miss Hilda, who is the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, has also the following observations to make: "It is a queer commentary on civilisation that just at the time when women have made every form of achievement and when there is plenty for all, the domination of women"





been roughly grouped by educationists under the following heads : (1) Academic education (2) Vocational education (3) Health education (4) Social and Civic education (5) Education for leisure (6) Education for the Home and pervading all these (7) Character education. What is generally known as liberal education must not only expand the scope of knowledge, but develop the critical mind and deepen the appreciation of what life offers. Everything turns on our relation to life, what we believe to be its purpose and on the conditions in which we find ourselves, for unless we have a clear notion of these, how can we prepare for life? Each country must, therefore, evolve its own educational system. We cannot merely imitate what has been found suitable in other countries by other people, in other conditions and surroundings. What are our conditions so far as education is concerned? The following description will give you a rough idea. My apology for quoting is frankly that I could not put it in better words myself. In a fine article entitled "A critical examination of the Education of Women", we find that Mr. Saiyadain tells us that "in British India alone there are about 13,000,000 girls of school-going age for whose education there is no provision! Only 16 per cent of the girls of school-going age (between ages of 6 and 1) as against 50 per cent of the boys, are actually in attendance in schools, most of which are but poor apologies for educational institutions. If the Governments were seriously to tackle this Problem, they would require more than 300,000 additional teachers, yet only 1500 teachers are now being trained each year. Again the education of girls is characterised by the same wastage which arrests the spread of literacy among boys. Indeed, it is even more acute because early marriage and other social factors are responsible for the premature withdrawal of the majority of girls joining the first class actually complete the primary course. This means that in the case of more than 85 per cent of the girls at school, there is no certainty whatever that permanent and effective literacy is being achieved. The strong presumption would be that a very large majority of them are unable to read or write; and what is more, in the absence of village libraries, the remainder are likely to relapse into illiteracy. The final implications are equally distressing. The amount of money now spent on girls' education is only 14 per cent of the meagre sum spent on boys' education. The total cost of providing schooling for girls of educable age who are not at school would, at the rate of Rs. 10 per girl, approximate to £10,000,000 per annum."

He observes further that "the general public has failed to evince sufficient keenness about the education of girls. There are still sections of the people, who, on pseudo-religious grounds or from conservatism, are actively opposed to all education for girls; and there are others who are at best apathetic. But we cannot dismiss this opposition as unworthy of consideration; for it has to be recognised that the type of education generally provided for girls has failed to capture the imagination or win the goodwill of the people at large. It has been, generally speaking, a poor copy of the education imparted to boys, reproducing faithfully and sometimes exaggerating, its objectionable features. It has been too bookish, too academic, too remote from the environment and cultural needs of the people; it also lays the same undue stress on the study of English at the cost of other useful subjects and skills, and it sacrifices, in the interest of pseudo-literary culture, the real objectives of a harmonious, comprehensive and psychologically suitable education. In rural areas, in particular, parents are generally of the opinion that the education of girls will not do them much good, largely because there is no outlet in the life of the average village for the kind of book knowledge now acquired by the girls. Their schooling does not adjust them successfully to their environment, nor does it enable them to become better villagers. In the larger towns and cities, however, there is an increasing demand for the education of girls, which gives them a better social status and also, to some extent, adds to their value in the marriage market. But here, too, the results have been generally disappointing. In that higher and secondary education has tended to produce what some people contemptuously call "society butterflies," whose values are measured by their wardrobe and other accessories by an unwarranted sense of superiority. They are restless and often anything, even to do the ordinary work of the household, they regard such work as derogatory and degrading, instead of

Is there any other way? What are we to do? The Council of the Thackersey Women's University is considering the question of providing a more practical and useful education for girls, one that will enable them to become better villagers and better citizens.

primary education, our higher educational institutions are bound to continue to be in an attenuated condition. The questions of the curriculum and of the essential content of the syllabus for girls have been engaging the attention of our educationists, and I have great hopes that we shall soon be able to transform the present depressing conditions by giving to female education the first place of importance in our Scheme of Education. We have a very uphill task before us. In taking the lion's share in performing it, the graduates of your institution will have an opportunity to justify the hopes and ambitions of the founder of this University. There is a demand for trained women teachers and for women workers in the several spheres of social reconstruction, which the national Government has undertaken in spite of the difficult political limitations and surroundings in which the present constitution has placed it. In this great work of social regeneration, we need the assistance and the devoted service of a number of selfless and enlightened women. To dispel ignorance, and spread correct ideas, to remove untouchability, to improve the insanitary conditions of life in our villages and render medical assistance, to assist in making prohibition a complete success, to spread the message of Swadahi and communal harmony, to bring up and educate our young generation on right lines,—here is work enough for the most indefatigable spirit. We have before us the example of Mahatma Karve who has devoted a whole life time to the cause of women's emancipation and education. We have fortunately in our midst to-day, the inspiring presence of Mahatma Gandhi ..... If these fail to convey to the young graduates, who have passed this year, the message which they need, and to inspire them to lead a life of service and sacrifice, no words that I can utter can convey it. India is known to be a country whose supreme interest is in religion. A great thinker has observed, "If I have a religion its first precept is that we shall seek truth faithfully" and I would say with Emerson "God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please—you can never have both." May our choice be right and in the interest of the motherland. May the example of the noble and selfless teachers, past and present, of our country guide us aright.

I thank you for the great honour you have done me.

## The Gurukul University Convocation

The following is the text of the Convocation Address delivered by Loknayak Shri M. S. Dasg at the Gurukul Vishva Vidyalaya, Kangri on the 24th. March 1946 :—

I wish at the very outset to thank you sincerely for the great honour you have done in asking me to deliver a Convocation Speech of the Gurukul Vishva Vidyalaya, Kangri this year. Several distinguished public men, educationists and Scholars have come to perform this pleasant function in the previous years. I was therefore very much hesitating to accept the invitation which was so kindly extended to me on your behalf by my friend Prof. Indra.

I ultimately accepted it however as I felt that I would be able to come in direct contact at least for a short time with the philanthropic souls who have dedicated their lives to the service of the sacred cause of education and the preservation of the most precious learning handed down to us as a valuable legacy by the Rishis from times immemorial. A dip in the holy waters of the Ganges is described as sufficiently potent to cleanse the body and the mind of all the sins committed in the life. I believe that the association with the saintly persons has undoubtedly the efficacy of lifting up the mind from the sordid to the serene, from the terrestrial to the celestial and from the material to the spiritual planes. Although I had no misgivings that I had very little to teach, I felt that there was a great opportunity for me to learn something. The temptation proved too strong to resist, I yielded to the pressure of Prof. Indra, and you find me here in your midst.

But, on no subject have learned men waxed so eloquent and have been so vocal as on the ideals of education, its aims and so on. It would be a modest and moderate estimate if I say that not less than 1000 learned scholars in the civilized world deal with the subject of education in some form or other in their addresses every year. The only noteworthy feature is that the subject is not

speak in the same language, therefore most of the speeches are unintelligible and remain unnoticed by people not knowing the language. If all of them were to be read, by one individual, he will have to read not less than three speeches a day. There will be hardly time enough for that student to be attentive even to the physical needs and requirements of his body. When such a problem is presented to us in all seriousness, I am inclined to regard that when God is said to have confounded the tongues of men, it was a blessing in disguise of course. If the whole world would have spoken the same language it would have been impossible even for the most advanced country to maintain an up-to-date library anywhere. I very much doubt whether a common language throughout the world would have really conducted to the general happiness of mankind and promotion of community of interests or worked otherwise.

Without being pedantic I think that any educational system which is worthy of recognition must have certain definite objects to pursue and achieve. A purposeless system of education will only turn out young men who are unable to play any useful part in the world after they come out of their Alma-Mater. The system of education which prevails in almost all the Universities established in India is to my mind one without any definite purpose in view. The system leaves no imprint on the mind or the heart of the recipient. His mind after having gone through a course of education over 15 or 16 years is like a clean slate on which anything can be written. It is a mind which can be subjugated and brought under its fascinating control or spell by any author who knows how to wield his pen with facility and express himself in a fascinating style. He is not at all inclined to question the author and challenge his conclusions. But those who are brought up in the school of education which had never placed before the young boys any ideal of the purpose of human existence or human dignity and human responsibility, have really no mental, moral or spiritual convictions by which they should be able to judge the observations of the authors whom they happen to read. Most of their reading is for recreation and little if any for serious study. The result is that the Indian educated youth on the expiry of the period of his graduation generally moves with a vacant mind, unable to know what he is, what he should be, what is his mission in life and what is his goal. He does not know where to go and what to do. He is a with no vision, no spirit of adventure and no initiative. Like a baby he still stands in need of spoon-feeding. Some one must provide him with the means of maintenance or else he will starve. It is an extremely pitiable and deplorable picture. But that is a reality to which it is no use to be blind.

Having thus drawn a rough sketch of the evil consequences of a purposeless system of education, I will like to make a few observations as to the nature of the purpose which any educational system must be designed to serve.

Education, in my opinion, must recognise the salient fact of the duality that permeates the entire creation which the Indian philosophers generally describe as *Jara* and *Chaitanya*. While the first is transient the second is eternal. Aim of education should be to give opportunities for the proper development of both these elements in the human being. Spirit of the man is to be distinguished from the flesh of the man for the purpose of education. The system must make an adequate provision for the education of both. Before chalking out any curriculum of study or course of discipline it is necessary to clarify the ideas regarding the spirit *Chaitanya* and the flesh *Jara* a little more. The spirit in the individual human being is the particle of the same eternal spirit which creates, preserves and destroys the phenomenal universe. The spiritual and religious education must aim to awaken in the individual the consciousness of being one with that Universal Spirit, the unborn primary cause of the creation and to mould the course of life so as to be consistent with this higher and nobler conception of his existence. I regard this part of the educational system as the most essential part of it. A proper conception of man's relation to the creator and his own place in the creation, is essential for him to play his part faithfully and intelligently. Unless particular attention is paid to the fostering of this spiritual faculty there is little chance for the humanity as a whole to make any real progress towards the goal of universal peace and universal brotherhood. Indifference to the real religious education as conspicuous in the educational systems has been the main reason of the numerous evils that mar the human existence miserable and barren history a story of perpetual strife and perennial factions. Indian Rishis have realised the need of human development as not merely mere physical but spiritual and intellectual.

and bestowed greatest thought over the same. A careful study of our religious literature and the philosophical systems coupled with rigid attention to the observance of the rules laid down in the Shastras for the observance of Brahmacharya Ashram can serve to gradually uphold this spiritual faculty. The period of training will certainly help the development of character emotions and other finer and sublime qualities which constitute the essence of the spiritual man. That the man can be in direct communion with his God and realise the bliss of being one with him is an article of faith with those who are brought up in the Vedic Culture. God's existence and the religious knowledge that serves as a means to its realisation are the target of the criticism mainly by those who have been in recent years coming in contact with the Communist cult and its teachings. That cult will sap and uproot the very foundations of human civilisation and culture. The faith in God as the perennial foundation of all bliss and source of inspiration to all in their pursuit of the happiness of their fellow-beings on the earth is the bedrock of Vedic culture. It is not a mere dogma but a rule of life that has to be taught and made part of his very existence by the study of the Vedic and philosophic literature and by the loyal and devout observance of the rules of the Brahmacharya Ashram, if the three cardinal injunctions (speak the truth, follow religion and study the Vedas and Shastras expounding Vedic knowledge and Vedic religion) be faithfully observed, the problem of the spiritual education of man can be satisfactorily solved. Sir, I went through the rules and courses of this great Gurukul Vishva Vidyalyaya. I was greatly delighted to find that due emphasis is given there on this aspect of education.

Having so far dealt with what I have described as the education of the *Chaitanya* spirit the permanent element within him, I must also make a few observations on the education of the fleeting element the flesh or *Jara* in him. The physical existence of a man in its widest sense is only an environment for the soul to live. Human body is described something in the nature of garments which a man may cast off or change in accordance with the changes in the environments under which he has to live. All that is comprised in the term study of Science literature and arts comes within the sphere of the subjects of the education of the flesh of the man. Here the educationist must carefully take note of the times and surroundings under which the human body has to grow and be useful. He has to study the problem of scientific education of his students with the same vigilance which the commander in chief in charge of a big national army generally gives in the formation of his army. He has to carefully note the changes that are coming over the methods of war-fare, the improvements in the machines and weapons designed to defeat and destroy the enemies, the size and formation of the regiments so as to make them mobile and so on. Greater attention has to be given to the development and adjustment of details and less to the principles. The education of the flesh in man must serve to make him a proper and useful and efficient unit of a big organisation that has to play a part in peace and war continuously for its own progress in particular and that of the humanity in general. The educationist must therefore provide all facilities to the students to get the latest and up-to-date knowledge of the sciences and arts. The great economic and industrial progress of Europe and America is mainly due to the marvellous advance which the applied sciences have made with the help of the research work carried on systematically and patiently by the scholars and scientists in their laboratories in those countries. India is far behind the civilised nations of the world in this respect. During the last quarter of a century the attention of the Indian Scientists is being gradually drawn to the backwardness of the country and a change for the better is undoubtedly coming over. Indian research has now gained a footing in the world of Science. It has carved out a place for itself. But let it not be ignored that the pace of this progress is still very slow. The reasons are obvious. Our Universities are not able to provide the research scholars with all the facilities and there is not sufficient encouragement forthcoming from the quarters to which this class of workers generally looks up for support. I will consider as wholly defective any scheme of education that does not recognise the importance of the study of the physical sciences and make adequate provision for their study and research in its curriculum.

I have referred already to the necessity of training the individual to be a fit and efficient unit of a big organisation which has to think, move and act collectively. It means to survive the strenuous struggle for existence that is going on all

over the world. The struggle sometimes appears in the garb of economic competition, sometimes it manifests itself in the form of military oppression. At times it dissembles itself in the innocent form of philanthropy and missionary zeal. But all the same it is one and the same struggle carried on by the strong against the weak, by the literate against the ignorant and by the rich against the poor people for domination and exploitation. It must be one of the avowed objects of our big national universities to equip the youth with the strength and spirit to fight this sort of domination. Association with a foreigner on terms of equality is compatible with the dignity and self-respect of any people. But long and abject submission by one people to the will and rule of another people cannot continue long without distinct demoralisation and degeneration of the people who are ruled.

India has been struggling in her own way for the last fifty years. We have now discovered that the real obstacle in the way of our immediate emancipation is that we are helpless in the matter of our defence. How can you defend India even if self-government be established here today or tomorrow. My blood boils with indignation when an Englishman puts this question to the Indians. He is responsible for the wholesale disarmament of the people of India after their subjugation by him. He is responsible again for the denial of any military career to her sons. He is responsible for killing the martial spirit of the millions of people in this land nearly for a century. I am fully aware that a free India is only a dream so long as Indians are not able to take up the charge of their defence. I do not believe in the theory that the non-violent weapons can effectively insure for all time to come against external aggression and internal oppression. Denial of the use of the requisite degree of violence either by an individual or by a community of people claiming to be a nation even in matters of self-defence is an impractical and suicidal proposition. Such a people can not survive for any length of time. Although the imperative importance of training the people in the art of the defence of the country has been recognised by some of the leading Indian Leaders many years ago, no attempt was made by anybody till my esteemed friend and leader Dr. Moonje took up this question in right earnest and pursued it with his characteristic zeal and energy. There are people who styling themselves as followers of the great apostle of Truth and Non-violence of Revered Mahatma Gandhi of Shergaon, not only minimise but even jeer at the establishment of the Bhosla Military School at Nasik. But I have no doubt that a grateful posterity will recognise the service rendered by him to the people of the country. The establishment of the Bhosla Military School is an epoch-making event in the history of modern India and it has already begun to have favourable and desirable reactions on the course of education in the country. At present we see a small beginning made here and there, but in a few years the movement will gain in strength and volume and momentum.

I hope that the educationists in charge of this great Seminary of Learning where their main ambition or rather aspiration is to train the youths in the Vedic Culture and Vedic traditions so as to make their worthy successors of the Great Aryans who once carried the flag of Vedic civilisation all over the world are not oblivious to the need of military training of the boys.

Let the youths have before them the ideal of Guru Drona-Acharya—

"Who is described in the above couplet as carrying 4 Vedas in the front and the bow and an arrow on his back. He is the embodiment of the Bramha and the Kabatra the spiritual and the martial spirit equipped with both power to curse and the weapons to strike".

That is the ideal which every Brahmachari should in brief place before himself. This institution will in course of time give India the men who will be the protectors of the Indian Nation equipped with the knowledge of the science and art of government both in its statical and dynamic form.

The Atreya Brahman says—

"The nation which is led by the Raashtra Gopa Purohit versed alike in the arts of war and peace will have its martial classes full of the spirit of valour and the industrialists and traders and the labouring people all of one mind. Such nation will make for all round and harmonious progress."

# The Madras University Convocation

The following is the text of the Convocation Address delivered by the Hon'ble Sri C. J. Vaskey, Minister for Education, Government of Madras, at the 82nd Convocation of the University held in Madras on the 4th. August 1939 :—

To-day we are assembled here for the eighty-second Convocation of the University—a function that is ancient in its origin and deep in its significance. It is a direct survival of the Middle Ages, famous for rituals and ceremonials, for the solemn investiture of Popes and Bishops, of lords and vassals. In the academic sphere of life, this ceremony takes the appropriate shape of a Convocation for conferring degrees and presenting diplomas. The cap, the hood and the gown we wear, the solemn promises made by the new graduates, the diplomas presented to them, and their bowing before the Chancellor, who personifies the University—all these are institutions we have inherited from the mediaeval days of glorious intellectual traditions—a period noted for its flourishing monastic schools and universities.

One customary item of this ceremony is an address to the new graduates. The address, however, is not an obligatory item, absolutely necessary for the completeness of the ceremony or for the validity of the Convocation. For, while, as regards the solemn promises, the statute lays down: "the Chancellor shall put to them the following questions," as regards the Convocation address, it merely states: "an address may be made to the candidates." Nevertheless, it has become so customary an item of this long ceremony that even His Excellency the Chancellor has permitted, and even wished for, the continuance of the custom, in spite of the desire expressed by several to cut it out in order to make the function as short as possible.

It is not only its customary character that justifies the continuance of this custom of delivering an address, but there is another and more rational justification arising from the very psychology of human life. The graduates who have taken their degrees to-day are entering upon a new chapter of their career. Just like the brides who, leaving the paternal roof and foregoing the maternal care, go to their husband's homes to enter upon a new chapter of their career, leading a married life with its intermittent joys and sorrows, so too, from the sheltered shores of scholastic life within the safe walls of the college, the new graduates are going to launch on the troubled waters of the ocean of life. A kindly mother blesses her daughter and gives her some good advice as to the way she should conduct herself in the new society of her husband's relations, so too, your kindly alma mater, the University, takes the occasion of this ceremony of Convocation to congratulate you on the honour you have gained as well as to bless you and wish you a safe and successful voyage across the stormy sea of public life, upon which you are now entering with the shield of knowledge and the armour of culture which she has imparted during your University days.

This year, thanks to the kind invitation of His Excellency the Chancellor, the privilege and honour of delivering the address has fallen to my lot. If I accepted the invitation it was not because I felt competent to discharge so responsible a duty, performed as it was during the past eighty-one years by eminent men—Governors and Administrators, Judges and Lawyers, Doctors and Educationists. However, as one who spent nearly quarter of a century in the field of education, as one who was, till the other day, an active member of several authorities of this University, and as one who has now been called upon to handle the portfolio of education at an important stage in the evolution of education in this Province, and, therefore, as the Pro-Chancellor of the University, I am deeply interested in the progress of education and in the welfare of the educated youth of the Province. If I accepted the invitation, it was because I felt it not only a pleasure, but a duty to welcome into the fold of enlightened leadership those of my young countrymen who have had the good fortune to receive University education and to enter the arena of public life, during these momentous years in the history of our country.

I feel happy that this Convocation takes place in the venerable Senate House—the University Convocation Hall itself, and not in the Sangamini Hall, which term smells rather too much of materialism and whose walls depict a story of political conquest and rule, and not of academic or intellectual achievements. I am particularly happy that this privilege and honour came to me

during this year of the Silver Jubilee of my own convocation. For it was in the year 1914—exactly twenty-five years ago—that I sat in this very hall among the new graduates of that year listening to the convocation address delivered by one of the distinguished sons of South India; I mean, Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer. What a change has come over this land during the past quarter of a century! He was then the only Indian and the only alumnus of the University in the Executive Council of those days; but to-day, as you know, the whole Cabinet of ten Ministers is made up of Indians, and most of them are alumni of this University. What an honour to the University to have thus prepared her sons to be the administrators of the Province!

The history of convocation addresses reveals the fact that the persons who discharged this duty in the earlier days confined themselves almost to the very letter of the law, and gave to the graduates of the year a real sermon as was in vogue at the mediaeval monastic universities. But in recent years I find that the scope of the address has been extended so as to embrace a survey of the educational problems of the day. I shall follow this later tradition of the University; but I will bring in such educational problems only so far as they fit into the main purpose of the convocation address, which, I understand from the statute, is "to exhort you to conduct yourselves suitably unto the position to which, by the degrees conferred upon you, you have attained." In doing so, I shall follow the good example set by the Rt. Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, who, in 1866, delivered the address at the twenty-ninth convocation of this University,—and his was one of the longest addresses delivered here. He prefaced his address with these words: "Having then a very great deal to say, I cannot possibly put it into the brief limits of an address, to which even the most indulgent of you could listen. I will accordingly merely read a paragraph or two for form's sake, and let my reflections find their way to you, not by the ear, but by the eye." I too shall adopt the same course of action.

Graduates of the year,—Let me at the very outset offer you, in the name of your friends and well-wishers, hearty congratulations on the academic distinctions conferred on you. Today is your day of joy and glory, for you have attained the first aspiration of your youth and secured a much-valued passport to your future career. Today you have been honoured by your alma mater, and you have richly deserved the honour. It has come to you as a reward for your talent and industry, your ability and labour, after a long period of continued study and after successfully passing through the ordeals of successive examinations by which the University tested your abilities and perseverance. Unlike the thousands left behind in the list of failures, you have done creditably, and some of you very creditably, securing coveted medals or other valuable distinctions. Indeed, some of you will not yet sever the ties that have so long bound you to the alma mater; some of you will endeavour to obtain higher honours at her hand after another period of submission to her guidance and direction. But most of you, I believe, have completed the period of your lives that you can afford to devote to academic pursuits. Let me, however, extend to all of you a hearty welcome into the fold of the Members of the University—a position to which you are now entitled by the honour which the University has conferred upon you today.

Now that you have been admitted to the membership of the University, you have to keep the first promise you have made today, which is tantamount to a solemn pledge taken by you on this memorable day. You have made a sincere promise and declaration that, if admitted to the degrees for which you are severally candidates and for which you have been recommended, you would, in your daily life and conversation, conduct yourselves as members of the University. If you are to understand the full implications of this promise and are to keep it faithfully, you have to entertain a great esteem for the University, and I will, therefore, refer to a few facts and features worth knowing about your University. Indeed, it is honourable to be a graduate or member of any University; but I should like you to realise that it is doubly honourable to be graduate of this University of Madras. Not because it is our University; not because it is one of the three oldest Universities of Modern India; but because of three other solid reasons.

In the first place, our University has a well-earned reputation for its high standard of knowledge and for the great weight of its degrees; and let it be noted that this reputation is not one gained yesterday or the day before. Even as early as 1860, but three years after the establishment of the University, in the course of the third Convocation address, Mr. J. D. Mayne observed:

"In England the mere Degree of Bachelor of Arts has been eclipsed by the Honours Examinations, so that it has become little more than a matter of form, and as it may be attained with very slight merit, so its attainment carries very little weight. Here the reverse is the case. It has been wisely considered that an infant University, like that of Madras, which has still got its name to make, should commence by only acknowledging real merit. It has been determined that, as far as can be, her stamp should only be impressed upon sterling gold, and not upon tinsel or pinchbeck. And accordingly the Examination for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts has designedly been made very arduous both by the number of subjects, and from the high standard of answering required." It is the unanimous opinion of the Examiners that it is fully as difficult to obtain a first rank among the Bachelors of Arts in Madras, as to obtain a second Honours in England, and those who receive the diploma of this University will go forth into the world, stamped as the possessors of knowledge far more extensive and accurate than would be evinced by the acquisition of a similar diploma at home."

It might perhaps be complained that this reputation is of by-gone days, and not of our own days. Yet that our University is maintaining its high standard even today is admitted by no less an authority as the Sadler Commission—the most important University Commission in India within living memory. Referring to the opinion of this expert body on the standard kept up by our University, the late Sir V. M. Coutts Trotter wrote to the Vice-Chancellor, in 1929, in these terms :

"I am told by the members of the Sadler Commission that the quality of a degree in the Madras University was no less than fifty per cent higher than that in other Universities. That is a thing to be proud of, and I trust that the Madras University will keep up its high standard of efficiency."

And I could testify to the same view from my own personal experience as a member of the University Syndicate. By insisting on a definite and high standard of proficiency in the professors, lecturers, tutors and demonstrators, working in the constituent and affiliated colleges under the University, as well as by a strict watch over the migration and admission of students to the colleges and over the conduct of the numerous examinations and their results, the University authorities have been steadily maintaining its reputation for high standard from the very commencement of its existence to the present day. I am sure, they will continue to jealously guard it; and, as far as the Government are concerned, the University could rest assured that, when recruiting men of other Universities for public services, we are scrupulously examining their qualifications so that the standard might not be lowered. It is not a special honour to be enrolled as a member of a University of such a high reputation?

Secondly, our University has produced a large army of great men who have shone as bright luminaries on the horizon of public service in South India, if not over the whole of India. Great statesmen and leaders, able administrators and politicians, eminent judges and lawyers, distinguished men of science and culture are found in large numbers among the alumni of this University. In fact, South India and our University have often supplied administrators and officers of highest ability also to the Central Government as well as to Indian States. The University of Madras has been a veritable nursery of many a great man of India. From the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from the highest of Simla to the depths of the Pearl Fisheries, one comes across administrators and officers, superintendents and clerks, produced by the University of Madras. Perhaps our University, more than any other, has fulfilled the hopes of those who penned the Education Dispatch of 1854, issued by the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor-General of India-in-Council and the British rulers in India. In the opening paragraph of that historic document, they expressed the hope that "the encouragement of education is calculated not only to produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness but to raise the moral character of those who partake of its advantage, and so to supply you with servants to whose probity you may with increased confidence commit offices of trust in India, where the well-being of the people is so intimately connected with the truthfulness and ability of officers of every grade in all departments of the State."

The example of their careers and the story of their achievements must be an inspiration to the rising generation of our graduates. Is it not an honour, I ask again, to be enrolled as a member of such an illustrious University?

\* In fact, the standard of our B.A. First degree course is so high, that now several students escape it by taking up B.A. Honours degree course.



The third feature worth noting about our University is that it is a progressive University, ever growing and expanding its may-sided activities. When I survey the history of this University, I find three well-marked stages in its evolution. Like the University of London, which served as the model for the three earliest modern Universities in India—Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, ours started as an *examining* University, conferring degrees on candidates after they had proved their fitness therefor by their respective examinations. The majestic and artistic structure—the Senate House—stood here—alone for a long time—as a concrete embodiment of this conception or purpose of the early days, recently supplemented by the new building on the Marina, known as the “Examination Hall.”

Then comes the second period in its history, when a great change in its conception was introduced, in 1923, by the first Madras University Act. The preamble which enunciates this fundamental change, reads thus :

“Whereas it is expedient to reorganise the University of Madras with a view to establishing a teaching and residential University at Madras while enabling the University to continue to exercise due control over the quality of the teaching given by colleges which are to constitute the University of Madras or are affiliated to it.”

And among the numerous powers the Act gave to the University it is significant that the very first place are assigned to this new conception :

“(1) to provide for instruction and training in such branches of learning as it may think fit and to make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge ;

“(2) to establish, maintain and manage Institutes of Research.”

Since 1923, therefore, the ideal before the University is no more that of a purely examining body. At one bound our conception of the University went even a step beyond the Newman's idea of a University. In the Preface to his well-known *Discourses*, the Cardinal laid down his dictum that a University is a place of teaching and that its object is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than its advancement. In the new Act of 1923 we made provision not only for the diffusion of knowledge, but also for research, for discovery and for advancement of knowledge. It was a bold, but salutary provision that was thus made by this first University Act of our own Legislature soon after its establishment under the Dyarchical form of Democracy introduced by the Reforms Act of 1921.

Now, this new ‘charter’ of expansion, this new policy and outlook enabled the University to take a long stride in the direction of teaching and research. A beginning, indeed, along this line had already been made, as a result of the University Act of 1904, with the introduction of two departments—the Department of Indian History and the Department of Indian Economics. It was, however, only after the passing of our own University Act of 1923 that the University adopted, a bolder programme by instituting several new Departments of Study and Research. Thanks to the generous financial support of the Government of Madras, thanks to the harmonious relationship between the University and the Government, thanks to the recognition of the University as an autonomous academic corporation, and, above all, thanks to the able administration and guidance of a succession of educationists as Vice-Chancellors—men like Rev. Dr. E. M. Macphail, Diwan Bahadur Sir B. Venkataratnam Naidu, Diwan Bahadur Sir K. Ramunni Menon, Rev. Fr. F. Bertram, S. J., Mr. B. Littlehales, Rao Bahadur Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar and Diwan Bahadur S. E. Runganadhan—all of them educationists of ripe experience, the University was able to adopt a more forward policy in the matter of creating a series of new Departments of Teaching and Research, which have become the envy of other Universities.

As the result of this forward policy, today our University can legitimately be proud of a fully developed scheme of teaching and research. There are now ten well-organised Departments—Indian Economics, Indian History and Archaeology, Indian Philosophy, Indian Music, Mathematics, Geography, and Politics and Public Administration, on the side of Humanities, and Zoology, Botany and Biochemistry, on the other, each, with its respective, separate well-built laboratories, on the side of Science. There is, besides, the Oriental Research Institute, with its six Departments of Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, Kannada, Sanskrit and the allied languages of Assam, Persian and Urdu. In addition to these ten Departments, Institutes and Schools as such, there is a School of Statistics and two part-time laboratories in Science.

European languages of French and German. In all these departments and sections together there are 5 Professors, 7 Readers and 21 Lecturers, with over 60 students working under them who are all engaged in research in the field of Indian thought and culture and in the domain of Humanities and Science. One striking feature of all these developments is the interest shown in, and the emphasis laid on, the promotion of Oriental Learning : and I believe I am correct when I say that in this department of knowledge no other University can show such an elaborate provision or so substantial an output. It is also worth mentioning that the University has instituted seven kinds of Diplomas, awarded to candidates who are taught by the University teachers and who come out successful in their respective examinations held by the University—a feature which makes the University a real teaching institution like the colleges under it. These seven Diplomas are for Economics, Geography, Music, French, German, Librarianship, and—the latest in the field, but one of the greatest importance—the Diploma in Politics and Public Administration, for which the first batch of students sat for their examination just last month.

Two other developments that deserve mention in this connection are the Libraries and the Journals. The intensive work of the enthusiastic staff and research students is made possible by having a special library attached to each of the Departments of Study and Research in addition to the general Library of the University, which, it may be noted with gratification, is one of the largest of its kind in our country, and is housed in one of the most magnificent buildings on the Marina. It is also worth mentioning that the University publishes, at present, two journals—one called "Journal of the Madras University," started in 1928, and the other known as "Annals of the Oriental Research Institute," started in 1936, as a journal independent of the former. These two journals afford good facilities for the staff and students working in the various departments, to record the progress they make in the discovery or advancement of knowledge. If I am found to have dwelt at some length on this aspect of the development of the University during the second period of its existence, it is because the whole organisation of the several Departments of Teaching and Research is such that any University may well be proud of the achievement in realising the ideal of a true University of modern days.

Now I pass on to the third period in the history of our University. It is difficult to date the exact beginning of this period. However, it may be said that during the past ten years a new development has been perceptible, and that is in the direction of social activities, calculated to promote social culture in the alumni of the University so that they may become better criticised of their country. It is the Progressive character of our University and the outlook of its authorities that suggested the new developments along this line, which distinguishes, more than anything else, this last period of its history. It is gratifying to note that, recognizing the fact that a University should not divorce itself from the active life around it, the authorities of the University have adjusted their policy to the changing circumstances of our country.

The two purposes of modern University education, as I take them to be, are intellectual formation and social formation—intellectual culture and social culture. A cultured mind is the highest and most desirable of human values, and it is the result of intellectual formation. We have to guard ourselves against thinking that acquisition of knowledge is the same thing as intellectual formation. The process of acquiring knowledge consists in collecting a certain amount of historical facts, philosophical theories, scientific principles or mathematical formulae : though, of course, this collection of data can be preliminary or a means to the formation of the mind. In the process of acquiring knowledge, whatever the field of that knowledge be—History or Philosophy, Economics or Politics, Mathematics or Science, the mind gets the training that is needed to bring out the force, the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of which that mind is capable. This discipline of the mind, this mental culture is the primary aim of University education from the very beginning of Universities, and it is in itself a good and useful asset for one's journey through life after one's University course.

How precious an asset this mental culture is, has been expressed most forcibly by Newman : General culture of mind is the best aid to professional and scientific study, and educated men can do what illiterate cannot ; and the man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyse, who has formed his taste and formed his judgment, and sharpened his intellectual

vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer, or a statesman, or a physician, or a man of business, or an engineer, or a chemist, or a geologist, but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings I have referred to, or any other for which he has a taste or special talent, with an ease, a grace, a versatility and a success, to which another is a stranger.

But, in our own days, without social formation mental culture cannot shine to the best advantage, and social culture, therefore, ought to be as much an aim of modern University life as intellectual culture. Hence arises the obligation of a modern University to provide by itself and through its colleges for that social formation which is so necessary for transforming its alumni into good citizens of the country. Indeed, our University has been quite successful in imparting intellectual formation and thereby producing great leaders of thought and action for various departments of administration and for public life. To carry out this function, and to sift the chaff from the wheat, the instrument used by the University has been, and will be, the system of public examinations. These examinations do test a few of the qualities necessary for success in life, such as better industry, application, memory and concentration of mind. But there are other social qualities to be acquired, which are more useful and necessary for active citizenship, such as leadership, courage, tact, conviction, decision, sympathy for the suffering, the weak, the depressed and the oppressed. If we are to get rid of that parochialism and communalism, that stand in the way of our achieving national solidarity and of making our system of Local Self-Government a greater success, we have to train our future citizens to live the social life and get rid of undue attachment to their own family, caste or community. If the country needs enlightened leaders and worthy citizens imbued with a spirit of service and sacrifice to make the country a better land to live in, it is but proper that the University should turn its attention and devote its resources more and more to increase the amenities for promoting students' social welfare, for developing their social qualities, and for training them in social character and spirit which are so necessary for the service of their countrymen. These qualities can be developed only through social activities. The Hostels, Unions, Clubs and playing-fields in our colleges and in the University are the natural training grounds for the cultivation of the social virtues.

The achievements of our University in this department of its activities are not so negligible as one is often led to think. I am not here speaking of the several social activities in the numerous colleges under the University; I am specifically referring to the activities of the University itself. There is, first of all, the Madras University Union, which is open to the students of the constituent colleges as well as to the Research students of the University, paying an annual subscription of Rs. 3, and which is managed by a Governing Body consisting of the Principals of the constituent colleges. It has two habitations—one on the Spur Tank Road, with sports and outdoor games, and the other in the Examination Hall with its indoor games, reading room and debates. The importance attached by the University to this institution may be gauged by the fact that the University is now spending a liberal sum of Rs. 12,000 a year on this Union and its activities and is now constructing a pavilion at a cost of Rs. 10,000. Of late, the University has shown a great deal of interest in athletics. Besides the athletic activities of the Madras University Union, Inter-Collegiate sports and games have now been well organised on a regional basis, with the colleges grouped in four divisions, having as their centres Madras, Bangalore, Trichinopoly and Trichur, and the University spends on these activities nearly Rs. 4,000 a year. The University is also actively participating in the Inter-University Tournaments, particularly in tennis and cricket. Then there is the University Training Corps, with its four companies, having an enrolment of 28 Officers and 637 other ranks. In the University Training Corps are represented almost all constituent colleges for men in the City of Madras, as well as three mofussil colleges—the Christian College at Tambaram and the St. Joseph's College and the National College at Trichinopoly. And on this important activity the University is spending nearly Rs. 5,000 a year. Thus it will be seen that the University has fully realised the importance now played by Hostels, Unions and play-fields in the social formation of the student, and the authorities of the University deserve our heartfelt congratulations on the great developments in the social side of University life. In what direction too our University has been progressive. In order to satisfy the new sentiments of a changing country, during the past few years

the University has revised and expanded its courses of studies, has instituted new degrees and diplomas, and has sanctioned new schemes for further development. Among the new courses of studies, special mention may be made of Islamic History and Culture, a new group added to both the Pass and the Honours courses; Hindi as a language group in B. A. Pass and Honours; all Dravidian languages having their respective Honours courses; Syriac introduced in the Matriculation, Intermediate, B. A. Pass and Honours courses; the two Oriental Title Courses of Malpan in Hebrew and Soppar in Syriac, and the introduction of a new Group D in the Intermediate, consisting of languages, which is a preparatory course for B. O. L. Again, the growing importance of library work is recognized by developing the three-months course for the Certificate in Librarianship into a one-year course for the new Diploma in Librarianship. The usefulness of a course of training in public administration has also been recognised by instituting a two-years course, open to graduates and others and leading to a Diploma in Politics and Public Administration; and I attach such value to this course that I have already moved in the matter of getting the Government to recognize and prescribe it as an additional qualification for those to be appointed as Commissioners of Municipalities and Secretaries of District Boards. Five new courses of studies and Degrees have also been instituted—(1) Bachelor of Commerce (B. Com.), (2) Bachelor of Veterinary Science (B. V. Sc.), (3) Bachelor of Oriental Learning (B. O. L.), (4) Bachelor of Music (B. Mus.), and (5) Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.). The old L. T. course continues as a one-year course, but with an important change, viz., the addition of a practical course, and the first batch of candidates for the new L. T. will appear in 1940; and the new degree of Bachelor of Education is one of two years of advanced studies. Besides, six new Research Degrees have been instituted—M. Litt., D. Litt., M. Ed., and M. O. L., on the Arts side, and M. Sc. and D. Sc., on the Science side. It is now proposed by the Board of Studies to institute a Diploma in Cooperation, which may eventually be developed into a Degree in Cooperation and Rural Science.

Two other welcome developments of recent years also deserve special mention here. The demand for popular University lectures in the mofussil has been met by the creation of University Extension Boards in different centres, like Madras, Coimbatore, Ernakulam, Madurai, Mangalore, Tellicherry, Tinnevely and Trichinopoly. About forty popular lectures on different useful subjects are delivered in a year, and thereby the University has extended its scope of education to the broader circle of the public. Thus, in one sense, the University is becoming more and more a teaching University and participating in the wider Adult Education movement. The other welcome development is the idea of starting Social Service Clubs in the colleges under the University. I am happy to think that our University is beginning to realise that it has not only to produce intellectually and socially cultured citizens, but has also the duty of supplying the country with men and women possessing a sense of social service, so that they may serve their fellowmen with a spirit of service and sacrifice—that missionary spirit without which much of social service cannot be expected out of the graduates of the University.

While it is gratifying to note the progress made along these lines of expansion in recent years, it is regrettable to mention that two important Faculties still await further development; I refer to the Faculty of Commerce and the Faculty of Fine Arts, which still await their respective colleges. With the growing economic development of the Province and the increase in the volume of trade, it is a surprise that no College of Commerce has yet come up in our Province. Perhaps it is the only ordinary course of studies for which our young men have to cross the boundaries of our University. It is my hope and wish that, with the cooperation of the Government and of business magnates, a College of Commerce will soon be a fact accomplished. As regards the Faculty of Fine Arts, indeed, a few colleges have started courses in Music, but it is worth while considering the possibility of developing the present Government School of Arts into a College of Arts. There is one other department that awaits its college and degree; I mean, Technical studies. We have neither a Degree nor a College of Technology under the University. Here, too, with the cooperation of the Government and the University, it seems to be possible to develop the present Government School of Technology into a College of Technology and the present Technical Institute into a Technological University. I must here mention one more fact to complete the picture of the development of the University. There are four schemes, already approved by the University Authorities, to institute four more departments of study and research, viz., Anthropology,

Experimental Psychology, Physics and Statistics, and I know that these useful schemes are kept in abeyance for want of adequate funds.

This brings me to the question of finances, which, being, in the words of Kantalya, "the pivot of the State." I cannot easily pass over without at least a brief examination. The two main sources of income of the University are the Fee Fund and the Government Grant. Is there any likelihood of a shrinking of these sources?—this is the anxious question that agitates the minds of all those interested in the continued progress of our University. As regards the Fee Fund, I believe, this Fund has already reached its high-water mark, and I apprehended that a steady diminution is not beyond the realm of possibilities. Two causes, I am afraid, will lead to this unpleasant result. In the first place, one big slice of the territorial jurisdiction of the University is being cut off as a consequence of the establishment of the Travancore University. Whatever may be the benefits the Travancore State might derive by having a University of her own, the finances of our University will certainly be hit hard. Although some of the colleges within the area of the Travancore University have broken off their connection and the rest will follow suit, a few of the students will continue to cross the limits of the State, to drink deep at the fountains of our University. But their numbers will be so small that they will not be large enough to maintain the financial equilibrium of our University.

A second possible cause for the shrinking of the Fee Fund is the diminution in the number of students that will henceforth enter the portals of University for higher education. It is the general desire that the large crowd of unfit candidates should not be allowed to enter the University courses, and if the recognition of Secondary Education as at present conceived is effected, certainly a large number of students will be diverted to vocational courses and will settle in life without entering the University courses. The general good of the country demands a reform of this nature, though it may have its repercussions on the finances of the University. But, if the contemplated reform of Secondary Education is judiciously carried out by a hearty co-operation between the Government and the University, I am confident that the finances of the University will not be affected to any considerable extent. If Government will provide attractive course and Certificates in different vocational subjects in the high school stage, and if the University will provide equally attractive, advanced, continuation courses in those vocational subjects and award diplomas and degrees to the successful candidates, I am sure many will continue to flock to the University for useful, advanced vocational courses and at the same time to profit by the benefits of University life. The only change in the position—and the change that we all desire—will be, not the diversion of the crowd from University education and life, but the diversion of those who are unfit for an advanced literary education, to an advanced vocational education. If the reform of Secondary Education and the readjustment of University courses are carried out on these lines, I can assure the University that its finances will not be disturbed on these scores to any perceptible extent.

Some of you, I am sure, expect the Education Minister to examine here another possible cause for the shrinking of the income of the University. There is a legitimate fear entertained in certain quarters that the present Government, with their desire to devote more attention and resources to mass education, with their policy of Prohibition on the one side and the policy of economy and retrenchment on the other, will soon turn their searchlight in the direction of the University to discover any possible chances of reducing the Government grant to the University. I, too, entertain such a fear, because in a system of Government in which the University grant is a votable item of expenditure, no one can prophesy what the future action of a sickle democracy will be. Nevertheless, as one who has fully and personally realized the needs of the University, as one who still thinks with our leaders like Sri S. Satyamurti that University education in this country has not reached that stage when it could be checked without detriment to the intellectual, moral and material progress of the people, you may rest assured that I shall have the needs of the University and of the country always in my mind.

But may I not take this occasion to point out to the authorities of the University another source of income which the University has not yet tapped; I refer to large private donations. Indeed, the University has been able to obtain a good number of endowments of Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 2,000 for instituting medals and other prizes to members of distinguished men and women; but is not open to the University to receive the amount as any capital expenditure or on any scheme of

expansion. For these the University must secure free and larger endowments or donations. In fact, when the Madras Legislature introduced two provisions in the first University Act of 1923, such a possibility was contemplated. We find, in the constitution of the Senate, provision is made for the enrolment as Life Members of "all persons who make a donation of not less than Rs. 25,000 to or for the general purposes of the University." It is also provided that "Every Association making a donation of not less than Rs. 25,000 and every person making a donation of not less than Rs. 10,000 but not amounting to Rs. 25,000 or more to or for the general purposes of the University shall be entitled to nominate one member of the Senate, who shall be a member for five years." Now, I am decidedly of opinion that, if after fifteen years of the life of the reformed University under the Act of 1923, we have so far received no donation, it is better that we remove these provisions when we amend the Act next time; for it is a disgrace to provide in the statute for the possibility of getting such donations and then tell the world through the annual report that we have secured none of those donations.

But in this connection I may be excused if I make an observation here. May I know if the University authorities have taken any steps to implement these provisions? Perhaps, with a feeling of security they have been sitting firmly on the rock of the block grant of Rs. 3,15,500, with hands and legs folded, without making any exertion to get a few such donations. Let them remember that even rocks are likely to be split into fragments under a severe earthquake. May I not appropriately refer here to the enthusiastic and successful efforts made by the Andhra University to secure several princely donations? Is that impossible for the University of Madras? Have the springs of benefactions gone so dry in South India as to discourage similar efforts being made by the Madras University? The fact is that the persistent refusal of the present Government to give any additional block grant to the Andhra University over and above the one-and-a-half lakhs originally promised and regularly paid, has driven the Andhra University to go in search of pastures anew. As the old proverb goes, it is necessity that is the mother of inventions and discoveries. The Madras University, with its regular annual block grant of three lakhs and odd, has no necessity to go about discovering new ways and means of adding to its capital resources. Can it be that the fear of courting disappointment prevents University from launching upon this venture?

Even if the University cannot get additional resources from the Government or from private benefactors, I may point out that there are certain ways of retrenchment; some of them are open to the University, while some others the Legislature must permit the University to adopt. If you examine the items of expenditure out of the Government grant, I am sure you will easily find two or three items suitable for retrenchment. I shall not point them out myself, but will leave them as a riddle or a puzzle for you to find out. When the question of amending the University Act is taken up, the Government will consult the authorities of the University on the question of introducing certain amendments so as to effect some economies without sacrificing present efficiency. With such additional resources it will be possible for the University to continue to maintain its policy of steady growth and development, introducing new departments of study and research and increasing the facilities for social activities in the University.

Graduates of the year.—Remember with legitimate pride that the University to whose membership you have been admitted today is thus one of glorious traditions and creditable achievements. Is it not natural, therefore, that the University should expect you to keep up its honour in your daily life and conduct, in your future career in whatever walk of life you may enter hereafter?

Most of you have, no doubt, finished the toils of learning; but you have now to begin the toils of life. Indeed, you have won laurels of victory in the Battle of Books or the Battle of Examinations; but now there lies before you the greater battle—the Battle of Life. The world you are about to enter is full of difficulties, dangers and disappointments. You will soon see around you a ceaseless strife going on everywhere in pursuit of food or fortune or fame. Unlike the world of College or University life which you are now leaving, you will find the new world full of passions and prejudices, errors and evils of diverse kinds. New problems will perplex you; false lights will misguide you; unexpected obstacles will stop you; powerful temptations will lure you; envy and jealousy will assail you. Nevertheless, let not the new world turn you into pessimists. Remember that life has agreed you for the future; the intellectual and social formation you have received

during your University life will stand in good stead in facing the coming Battle of Life. You have shown your mettle in the battles you have already fought and won in the world which you are emerging from. With the knowledge, culture and virtue imparted to you during your scholastic life, with the endurance and perseverance manifested by you in the Battle of Examinations, and with the boldness and courage with which you have surmounted the difficulties of your collegiate career, you must now, with courage and hope, enter the new world with optimism and fight successfully the Battle of Life.

In spite of the apparent gloom that darkens the horizon around, you could still win the Battle of Life, provided you possess certain qualities which make for success. Your past success in the Battle of Examinations implies that you possess qualities which give no small assurance of fitness for the various callings to which you are destined. You have given proofs of your capacity for sustained application to academic studies, of your aptitude for prolonged intellectual work, and your willingness to have your knowledge examined and tested and to have your inclinations subjected to discipline and control. With these advantages of intellectual and moral preparatory equipment which ought to prove serviceable in your future career, you will now go out into the world to fight, boldly and confidently, the Battle of Life before you. But, in order to maintain the vantage ground, you will have to show that you can rise equal to new situations, which will make constantly recurring demands upon your mental powers and resources, as well as social and moral qualities, which active employments require. You will be frequently confronted with practical difficulties which you must bravely meet and successfully overcome, and as you grow in experience, you will gradually acquire the requisite skill and confidence to enable you to discharge the several onerous duties that will devolve upon you in years to come. And when you enter the world, let the words of Bacon be always ringing in your ears: "But chiefly the mould of a Man's Fortune is in his own hands." Remember that, like your spiritual salvation, your economic and social salvation lies in your own hands.

Before I proceed further, let me here sound a note of warning to those among you who have carried away coveted laurels of victory in the shape of medals and other prizes. Generally speaking, these are, indeed, valuable passeports for you to enter the world of competition more easily than your less fortunate companions; but let me forewarn you that they do not necessarily carry with them a guarantee of success in life. It is common enough to tell those who have gained prizes as students that the same qualities which placed them above their fellows in their respective classes, will procure them equal prominence in their after-career. It is partly true, for talent and industry will always bear a market value; but it is not whole truth. Otherwise we should not see so many instances of clever school boys and brilliant University men who turn out utter failures in after-life. The fact is that distinguished success in practical life calls for qualities, mental and moral, which you have not been required to display as students. It is upon the possession and exercise of these qualities that your future success depends. The four essential requisites of success in adult life are the power of increasing knowledge, skill in applying that knowledge, and the cultivation of social and moral qualities.

You must always bear in mind that the knowledge which any one of you possesses is but a tiny portion of the whole. Literature and Science are Himalayan regions, in which the horizon extends as the mountaineer ascends. Whatever department of knowledge you may have selected and specialised in, you will find a lifetime too short for the work that lies before you. The University has but initiated you into a corner of the vast field. It has entrusted to you a lamp of knowledge, and your duty is to keep it burning more and more brilliantly, taking care to pour more oil into it and keep its wick regularly trimmed in time. You have, indeed, completed your collegiate career; but you cannot claim to have completed your education or the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is truth, and all of us, throughout our life, are seeking after truth. You may perhaps know that quaint old saying: "Truth like a torch, the more it's shook it shines." Into whatever profession or avocation you may enter, your making a mark in it depends on your continuing to study and learn, keeping your torch of knowledge burning bright. A thorough knowledge of all the available literature in a particular line will prove a powerful weapon in the hands of every one in that profession or service. However, I must make the appeal in a special manner

to graduates in Law, Medicine and Engineering. These branches of knowledge demand the labour of a life-time. In the case of Law, the field is so vast and the possible applications are so varied that no one should enter on its study who is not prepared to be always learning. And Engineering are sciences that are, in this age, eminently progressive. Every day additions are being made to our knowledge of the working of Nature and of the methods of subduing her forces—the legitimate work of Doctors and Engineers. You must, therefore, be ever watchful of what is new and ever labouring to extend the limits of your domain of knowledge, if you desire to succeed in life by maintaining proficiency and attaining distinction in your special calling. Not only these graduates of professional degrees, but every one in whatever department of life, must remain a lover of books—books which bring knowledge. Knowledge connected with your particular department of work can never be useless. It is your knowledge added to the social and moral qualities that will secure you a higher stage of success.

Apart from the question of adding to one's stock of knowledge in his own branch of study, there is the wider question of keeping up that intellectual culture you have received from the University. Every one of us must be readers of books of men, and of facts. Even the busiest of us must endeavour to drink deep at the fountain of knowledge, to draw in and make our own the water of other minds. We must also keep ourselves over moving with the stream of human thought that has flowed on and shall flow on through all the ages. One of our eminent doctors lately drew pointed attention to this fact. In his convocation address, two years ago, Rao Bahadur Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar observed :

"I deplore the tendency in some of the alumni of the University, to so engross themselves in their particular vocation, that they have neither the time nor the inclination to pursue their literary studies, or to cultivate their faculties of close reasoning and constant inquiry. Nothing is calculated to petrify the development of the intellect and make it submissively accept the preconceived opinions of others, as this policy of intellectual inertia. One of the greatest legacies of a University training is that the best thoughts of the men of letters of all nations of the world are available for the keen student of human nature, and it is these elevating ideas and ideals that will, ere long, help one to take his proper place in the body politic and add his quota to the welfare of the general public."

Men whom you meet in all their variety of intellectual and moral nature, the political and social forces at work around you, the tendencies and aims of current speculation, will furnish a well-trained mind with food for constant thought—thought that will elevate and brace your whole inner man by keeping you in perpetual contact with what is real and enduring beneath the shows of the fleeting hour. While I advise you not to despise or neglect the words of other minds in the world I would at the same time emphasise the need of resisting the temptation of blindly following the thoughts and ideas of others. Having listened to other minds and assimilated what they have to give you, you have the duty of forming your own opinions. Only by venturing to think your own thoughts and to acknowledge no authority but that of the truth you have discovered, can you enable your minds and discharge your responsibility.

More important than knowledge is its practical application to different situations in life. Mere knowledge of facts, theories and principles is not sufficient for success in life without that skill in their application, which is only to be acquired by experience. One can acquire a mastery in the theory of swimming without seeing more water than would fill a basin ; but, if he were to rely solely upon this, he would be drowned the very first time he ventures out of his depth. A Medical student may be acquainted with use of every drug in the Pharmacopoeia, and may be perfect in describing the symptoms of every known disease ; but the first time he is taken to a sick bed and told to ascertain, from the languid eye, the feeble pulse and some incoherent answers of the patient, what his illness is, the Master of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery begins to realise his own weakness. And so it is with every profession in its own way. Proficiency and distinction in a profession can be acquired only by patient study of the realities of life, by long experience in the application of facts, principles and theories to concrete situations. I tell you this not with a view to discourage you, but to make you realise that you should not consider your education complete when and though you have mastered everything that could be found in the text-books and laboratory books you have received, and that you must be prepared at first for very slow progress and should expect success only after you have completed the study of the Book of Life.



It is well that you should know this, as it will serve the double purpose of checking that excessive self-confidence which is always felt at first by youth overflowing with book knowledge, and of softening the sense of disappointment and of failure, which you are sure to experience when you first come into competition with the trained intellect of an experienced man in the profession.

More important still are the social and moral qualities which give both knowledge and its application stability and direction. All your talent, learning ability and industry will be of no avail unless you possess in abundance also social moral qualities. The need of possessing developed social qualities springs from the very nature of man as a social animal. Your character must be such that you love others and are loved by others. When you occupy positions of importance in life, whether in public administration or in private services, you have to deal with equals, superiors and inferiors. To all these alike you must show a spirit of love, kindness and consideration. In deciding questions of reward and punishment, appointment and promotion, suspension and dismissal, you will have to be guided by a sense of justice seasoned with mercy; you must govern with firmness and yet with kindness. One lesson I have learnt during the short period I have been in office is that our administration is so wooden, so mechanical, that the human element is often forgotten. In a land of poverty and misery, what is legal before the State may not be what is legitimate before the Creator. If our great Emperor Asoka is called "the Humane" it is because he did not ignore the human element in administration. Secondly, in our social and civic relations, we must not set aside the feelings of others. In a land of diverse creeds and castes, we must learn to be more tolerant of our neighbour's feelings, sentiments and even idiosyncrasies. In life you will come in contact with innumerable men with religions, opinions and temperaments different from yours. But do not on that account despise them or wound their feelings. The popularity of great and good men is directly proportional to their habit of respecting others' feelings. Differing capacities for judgment, diversity of interests and multiplicity of standards of right and wrong are potent causes for division and strife in our country. But the graduates of the University have the duty of setting an example of social accommodation in a land of such diversities like ours; they are to be the embodiment of social virtues.

Moral qualities are even more important than social qualities for success in life. The first place among them I would give to courage of conviction. If, after inquiry and thought, you have reached a conviction, avow it without considerations of fear or favour. It is only in that way that you could make your contribution to the progress and propagation of truth, so essential for the progress of our country. If you are convinced that a belief in good and bad omens and other superstitions and errors has done harm to individuals, that bad and unhealthy social and religious customs have done a disservice to the cause of our national progress, and on the other hand, that such policies of our Government as the Policy of Prohibition are in the best interests of the people, do not hesitate to say so, even from the top of your house and at the top of your voice. In short, think straight, see clear and speak loud.

A second quality which will smooth your passage through your new world of differences of opinions and divergences of interests, is a spirit of compromise. Often one hears this loud proclamation from the young as well as the old: "I hate compromises; I am an uncompromising fellow." If there is one lesson more than another which the Muse of History teaches her devotees, it is the need of compromises in life. It is said that parallel lines do not meet and that the North Pole cannot meet the South Pole. Naturally, parallel lines nor the Poles could meet each other; but the spirit of compromise is so supernatural a force that it can successfully overcome the Laws of Nature. How many, stubborn conflicts in the history of a nation or in the history of international relations, have been settled by the spirit of compromise! Without sacrificing one's tried and cherished principles, without forsaking the fundamentals, we can settle our differences by mutual concessions with, and with on either side. Deadlocks and standstills so prevalent in our economic, civic and political life of today, could be avoided by mutual concessions. If you, Hindu, Muslim and Christian graduates of the University desire to be the makers of a New India, whether it be through National Congress, District Boards or Legislatures, or even in private life, you must always serve your country—a country of diverse creeds, castes and communities—more than you are actuated with a spirit of sectarian animosities, which, however, great and deep short of sacrificing the fundamentals.

The third quality which will be a prop to you throughout your life is the possession of good manners. Good manners diminish the friction which attends one's passage through life, while the absence of them may even seriously mar great abilities or moral worth. It is worth repeating every day, along with the morning, noon and evening prayers, that good manners are to life what oil is to machinery.

The crowning moral quality I would recommend to you for success in life is the cultivation of the principle of honour, without which all your intellectual powers will only be a snare to yourselves and a source of danger to others. Many are the temptations which are likely to beset your path in life—temptations from without temptations from within—to resist which will require the energetic action of all the better elements in your character. It is worth while for you, therefore, to meditate daily on the truth that there is nothing so easy to preserve as your honour, if it is carefully and jealously watched, and that there is nothing so impossible to regain as your honour, if it is once lost or tainted. The dishonest man does a threefold injury: he injures himself, he injures the person whom he defrauds, and he injures every other honest man by weakening that confidence which we are naturally disposed to place in the integrity of others. Never for a moment forget the golden saying of the brave Duke of Saxony: "the straight line is the shortest road."

However, I should like to warn you against that utilitarian maxim: "Honesty is the best policy." It is a sound maxim, if you do not confound the result of honesty with the reason for honesty. Honesty is the best policy, but the man who is honest because it is politic, will be apt to reverse the maxim and to think that what he fancies to be most politic is really honest. Be honest, because it is right. Because of your honesty, you may not perhaps be rewarded by status and wealth, but you will, I assure you, reap your reward in that self-respect and contentment, which always follows up a consciousness of having done your duty, which neither status nor wealth can ever bestow. Though honesty is the best policy, it may not be a paying policy in this wicked world, but as members of the University you are to shine as stars of purity and brilliance in the firmament of Indian society.

It is to make you happy in spite of the adverse effects of your policy of honesty that I recommend to you one more quality—contentment—a soothing balm to heal the sores of adversity. While you strive after increasing success, learn to be contented with what falls to your lot. Without contentment no man can be continuously happy in this world. It is mind that makes a 'heaven of hell' and a 'hell of heaven.' In the heat and tumult of the Battle of Life, I appeal to you not to forget that the factors of happiness are not wealth, power and position, but health, competence and contentment.

These four, then,—the power of knowledge, the skill in its application, and the social and moral qualities—I assure you, will bring you success in the Battle of Life. Firmly and consistently do your duty, neither out of fear nor for favour, but out of a sense of duty, and do not allow, in your daily life, inclination to take the place of duty, and success will be yours. Be heroes, determined to succeed, and your determination to succeed is half the victory in the battle. You have the best wishes and sincerest blessings of you alma mater and of your friends and well-wishers for a successful life in the world outside the portals of the University. Carry with you George Herbert's words of advice, encouragement and hope:

Fit thy behaviour low, thy projects high,  
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be;  
Sink not in spirit; who aimeth at the sky  
Shoots higher much, than he that means a tree.

The Battle of Life is bad enough for all; but it is worse for the graduates that enter upon it during these years, and the main reason thereof is the problem of educated unemployment. The problem had not attained its present dimensions or intensity when I left the University twenty-five years ago. There was then a certain amount of correlation between the supply and the demand; but today the supply exceeds the demand a hundredfold in every walk of life, in every branch of public service and in every department of business, so much so that not only has the market value of a degree or a diploma considerably gone down, but there is not an adequate demand even for a supply at a much lower value. The graduates of today cannot, therefore, enter the world of life with any confident outlook, and the problem is engaging the serious attention of both Government and University. The problem has assumed such importance today that I feel the need of if I venture to devote a few minutes for its consideration, particularly to consider this question—

viz., on whom should the blame rest ? and how should we remedy the evil or solve the problem ?

Is the University responsible for the alarming proportions the problem has assumed in our Province ? No, I will not throw the blame on the University. The aim of a University is the spread of intellectual and social culture, imparting to those who seek entrance into it mental discipline and social spirit that are highly necessary for any one who seeks success in life, whatever be the service or activity in which he may engage himself. Like a Temple of Knowledge, the doors of the University are to be kept wide open to admit within it every one eligible for admission therein, without distinctions of sex or caste or creed or colour. Whether all those going out of its portals will derive adequate material advantages as a result of the stamp of mental and social culture imprinted on their minds and hearts, is no concern of the University. Because there is likely to be a larger supply of graduates than the world could consume, is the University to shut its doors against the devotees of knowledge and culture that knock at its doors ? The duty of the University is to supply the country with men and women of culture as leaders of thought and action, to gather under its wings men and women of all castes and communities and send them out into the world with a national outlook as self-respecting members of the Indian nation, to feed the stream of nationalism with the ideas contained in the books they study and with the instruction they receive in the Colleges under the University—in short, to breathe a new spirit into the rising generation of men and women so that they may become able leaders and worthy citizens of a New India. And that our University has played this part nobly and successfully is borne out by the civic and political consciousness and activities we see around us to-day. By introducing the vivifying influences of Western learning and spirit, by promoting the identity of interests and the spirit of nationality, by producing men and women of knowledge and culture to fill positions of trust and responsibility, our University has discharged its duties faithfully and successfully. If some of them, or even many of them, do not find lucrative occupations in life, we cannot well lay the blame at the door of the University.

Shall we, then, blame the parents who blindly send their children to the University, hoping to enable them, through University education, to settle in life with a comfortable income for their maintenance ? I will neither blame the parents for what they do, though what they do is done blindly and instinctively. The system of education introduced by the famous Dispatch of 1854 had the effect of creating a new intellectual aristocracy, and every parent wanted his child to be born or reborn into this new caste—the 'Brahmin' of the new education. To him alone were open the doors of respectable and lucrative positions, either in Government services or in business offices. In a land of castes, it may be pardonable if every parent desired to find his son occupying a position in the highest caste of the 'Brahmins' of the new intellectual aristocracy—an aristocracy of knowledge, of office, of power, of status and of wealth. Without the hallmark of a University degree none could enter the inner circle of this aristocracy. Naturally, therefore, there has been a rush for University education and consequently an overcrowding in the colleges and Universities of the country. As long as there is no other alternative course open to the parents to give their children a respectable position and a lucrative occupation in life, what they have been doing blindly and instinctively has to be condoned.

Shall we, then, throw the blame on the Government ? Indeed, the Government of the country is more responsible than the University for solving this problem of unemployment. The eligibility of admission to the University is determined by the results of the S. S. L. C. Examination—an examination which is under the control of Government, an examination for which the courses of studies are prescribed by Government and whose conduct is entrusted to a body appointed mainly by Government, an examination which is made to serve the double purpose of entrance into the public services as well as entrance into the University. For want of adequate facilities for boys and girls to enter upon diversified and respectable courses preparatory to different walks of life, all run the same groove, only to find out at the end that their studies lead them nowhere but the University comes in Arts and Sciences. In my humble opinion, the Government has to share the major part of the blame for the sad state of affairs, and it has to share the Government, in collaboration with the University as well as with the Government.

to find out a proper solution of the problem. The present Government will shortly be taking up the question of solving this problem.

On what basis and on what lines shall we approach the problem? The report of the Hartog Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Simon Commission, went thoroughly into the question of the state of education in India. Though the main purpose of the enquiry was in relation to an extension of the franchise, the Committee took the opportunity—the first opportunity afforded since the Hunter Commission of 1882—to survey the whole field of education. This report, published in 1929, formed an important document—a valuable addition to the literature on education in India. In point of importance, the Hartog Committee Report was to elementary and secondary education what the Sadler Commission Report was to University education. Among the many findings of the Hartog Committee, the report drew prominent attention to three disquieting and significant features of the state of education, viz., (1) the ineffectiveness of a large portion of the total expenditure on education, particularly in the sphere of elementary or mass education; (2) the large number of unfit candidates who were finding their way into the colleges and higher educational institutions; and (3) the lack of flexibility in the system of secondary education. We are here concerned only with the last two features—the entrance of the unfit candidates to the University and the lack of flexibility in the secondary education course. On a careful examination it will be found that these two features are related as cause and effect: it is because of the lack of flexibility in the system of secondary education that many unfit candidates rush madly into the University courses in Arts and Sciences. The more we recognize the truth of this view, the nearer shall we be to the solution of the problem in hand. Because the S. S. L. C. system does not afford facilities to the students to choose different courses of studies according to their talents, aptitude and purse, all run along the same course and push their way into the University and make our colleges too crowded to enable them to acquire adequate intellectual and social culture. One of the requisites of true intellectual formation is the tutorial system. With such large crowds in our college classes and with the present system of “mass lectures” (to borrow a characteristic expression of the late Professor Corley), and with the poor finances of most of our colleges, it is simply impossible to have anything approaching the tutorial system, which the English Universities are famous for. None has realised the value of the tutorial system to the same extent, nor has any one spoken so strongly in favour of it, as our esteemed friend Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy, who, in the course of his Convocation address, five years ago, said:

“As for the intellectual side of the University education I would earnestly plead that the genuine tutorial system, which consists in a regular Professor or Lecturer being in charge of a small number of students whose reading he guides and with whom he discusses the subject of a weekly essay, may be more widely used, whereas most colleges seem to be satisfied with the imitation article which consists in the appointment of a low paid corrector and marked of more or less satisfactory answers to more or less probate questions. It is the weekly essay and the discussion with one's tutor, the training in the art of examining and appraising original documents or historical or political data or economic facts that distinguish the Honours courses at English Universities, and which would, till the want is made good in India, make it advisable for our best graduates to proceed to English Universities to get a training which Indian Universities and Colleges do not at present provide.”

So, too, in the matter of social formation much headway cannot be made with the large number attending our colleges. Play-grounds are not adequate for various games and for every one to get a turn. College Hostels are so limited in their accommodation that most of the students of a college have to find their lodging in outside hostels or hotels that are physically and morally unhealthy and unsuited for concentrated intellectual pursuits. Common Rooms, Clubs and Reading Rooms in colleges are inadequate to meet the requirements of the large numbers. Students' Associations and Societies have so large a membership that very few get a chance to speak or to take part in a debate. For any adequate social formation our numbers are too many. In many ways, therefore, with such large numbers, real improvement—intellectual, moral or social—in the University life of today is almost impossible of realisation.

How to control the numbers and restrict them to proportionate education is

the problem before educationists, before the University and the Government. In our anxiety to limit the numbers, we should not, however, restrict the opportunities for higher studies to any deserving aspiring youth. It is an admitted fact that, although some fail in their University examinations for want of serious and constant application, by far the majority fail in them for lack of aptitude for higher academic pursuits. Instead of allowing all to rush along the same route, we have to afford facilities by providing varied courses of studies during the secondary education stage so that each of the aspirants for higher studies may find provided something that is congenial to his natural talents and aptitude and practicable within his limited financial resources. What we should aim at is a reorganization of the secondary education course so as to enable those who have a call for vocational education no less than those who have the necessary aptitude for literary studies, to find suitable choices provided in the high school course, and also an expansion of the present University courses so as to provide for more diplomas and degrees in vocational or professional courses, which shall be a natural continuation of the high school vocational courses. Thus, by a readjustment or reorganization of the secondary education course and by adding a few more vocational courses in the collegiate or University stage, we shall be able to solve the problem as far as the Government and the University could do. If the Government, the University and the businessmen put their heads and shoulders together, I am optimistic enough to think that we shall be able to solve the problem of educated unemployment to the extent that is possible in the present circumstances of our country.

So far I have placed before you a fairly complete idea of your University in order to enable you to realise how honourable it is for you to be members of such an illustrious University; and I have also explained how you could win the Battle of Life. Now it remains for me to bring home to you some of your responsibilities as graduates of the University.

Corresponding to the honour you have obtained, it must be borne in mind, you have certain new responsibilities resting on your shoulders. These responsibilities arise out of the three promises made by all the graduates assembled here and the one promise specially made by the graduates of professional degrees. All of you have promised that (1) "you will conduct yourselves as members of this University," (2) "you will support and promote the cause of morality and sound learning," and (3) "you will uphold and advance social order and the well-being of your fellow-men"; and the graduates of the professional degrees have promised in addition "that you will faithfully and carefully fulfil the duties" of your respective professions, "that you will, on all occasions, maintain their purity and reputation, and that you will never deviate from the straight path of their honourable exercise by making your knowledge subservient to unworthy ends." These four promises constitute your 'charter of duties,' which go with the honour and privilege you have obtained today. Let me now discharge my duty of bringing out the implication of these promises, so that you may enter the world of life with a full consciousness of your new responsibilities.

By virtue of the hall-mark of the University you have entered the inner circle of the leaders of the nation—leaders of thought and action. As torch-bearers of culture, you have acquired the right to join the band of leaders who are carrying on the administration of the country and are working for the progress of the people. You are the light that has to illuminate the dark corners of our society. You have to be the pioneers of progress in different departments of national advancement. On you rests the heavy responsibility of your countrymen to a happier life by raising the material and moral standards of their life. The nation looks up to you as leaders to elevate her in the comity of civilized nations. Whatever your avocation in life, you have to render service to your country. Be "Servants of India." Will you not shoulder the responsibility corresponding to the position of honour you have attained to day? Let me briefly place before you some of the problems of your country and point out to you how you could serve your fellow-men as leaders of thought and action.

The greatest problem before us today is how to attain national unity which, History shows, is the necessary requisite of national advancement. Unfortunately, owing to the antecedents of past history of the country, our nation has become a museum of races, of languages, of cultures, and of religions—a land of fundamental diversities instead of being a land of fundamental unity. Unless we develop a unity and solidarity out of these diversities, our nation cannot take its legitimate place among the advanced nations of the world. Every patriotic son and daughter

of Mother India has the responsibility to work for her unity, particularly the educated and enlightened section to which you now belong. You have the responsibility, therefore, to work for the harmony and concord between the various elements constituting Indian nationality. The three main communities—the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian—must be educated by you, as their leaders, to live together, to work together and to fight together as brethren of one family, as we see today in other civilized nations. By the negative social service of not speaking from the platform or writing in the press anything that will promote communal disharmony, distrust and disputes, and by the positive social service of clubbing together in associations and societies, as you have hitherto done in your college and University Unions and Clubs, you have to educate the citizens of the country, by both precept and example, how to behave as brethren of a family, as citizen of a common country. This would be one of the greatest services you could render to your Motherland. The intellectual and social formation you have received from the University will help you to discharge this responsible duty of yours. Secondly, by organising local, civic, social and cultural associations and societies, irrespective of castes and creeds, in your towns and villages, you could help on the cause of the material and moral uplift of your fellow-men. You have promised that you will, as far as in you lies, uphold and advance social order and the well-being of your fellow beings. Introduction of healthy social and moral reforms is necessary under the present conditions of society in India. Through such organizations you could profitably work for the welfare of your countrymen, and thus discharge this responsibility of yours. You are to lead the nation along the right path of well-being; you are to guide your people to appreciate, or, if the case be, to condemn the several movements in the land, be they for social or economic or moral or civic or political advancement. The average man, without that education which it has been your privilege to enjoy, will look up to you to interpret the policy and programme of the Government of the Province or of the country and to represent to the Government and to the local authorities their disabilities and grievances as well as their opinions on the measures the Government happen to introduce for their welfare. Thus you occupy a responsible position as the interpreters of the policy of Government to the people and as mouthpieces of the people towards their Government. It is through such organizations that you could discharge this responsibility of yours more effectively and, therefore, more successfully. Hence the need for you to take a lead in developing popular societies, clubs and associations for the well-being of your fellow-men. You have also the responsibility of upholding law and order. Without these no country could be great nor could a nation attain material and moral progress. These are days of revolt against lawful authority, of extravagant exhibition of one's liberty of thought and action, of violent representations of one's disabilities and grievances. Of late, we have had a number of strikes of students, of labourers, and of motor drivers. "Down with aided managements," "Down with the Headmaster," "Down with the Police," "Down with the Ministry"—such slogans have, of late, rent the air, here as well as elsewhere in our Province. And quite recently one of the City papers correctly observed :

"Violent denunciations breathing ill-will against all and sundry are the bane of agitations that depend on public support for their eventual success and are conceived in the form of appeals for intervention addressed to Government. A little less of destructive zeal will do no harm to demonstrators bent on a parade of their wrongs, and the secret of winning sympathy—and through it redress—lies in reducing offensive outbursts to a minimum in the course of ventilating a grievance."

In all these movements you have the duty of giving the right direction to the new forces that are let loose in modern society. As enlightened leaders and cultured citizens, you have to lead the nation along paths of truth and non-violence—two great virtues for which our ancestors were once famous. You have appreciated the value of discipline, the importance of law and order, during your University life. These qualities are needed also in the State for its well-being so that the citizens of the country may lead a happy life, continually enjoying security of person and property, and peacefully carrying on their respective vocations in life. In this matter, too, you have to be leaders of thought and action.

If you have a sufficient mastery of your mother-tongue, you could devote a part of your time and leisure to enrich with modern thought and thought the literature in the various languages of our country. Especially at a time when

we cannot make much headway in furthering our policy of substituting Indian languages for English as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges, you could make your contribution to the production of suitable books for the use of the rising generation of students. You have both the facility and the opportunity to be of service to your less fortunate brethren and sisters that sit still in the shadow of ignorance and darkness. The knowledge you have gained through the medium of English, you have a responsibility to impart to the multitude to whom God had not given favourable opportunities for school or college life. The Adult Education movement, which is still in its infancy, looks up to you for service and support. By means of occasional lectures, good, informing articles in the papers and magazines, and cheap, wellwritten tracts and books, on the subjects of your special studies, you could do immense service to your fellowmen—a duty which you have to discharge as worthy members of the University, as torchbearers of knowledge and culture, as respectable and responsible citizens and lovers of your country.

A field of activity that will give you ample opportunities of service is social reform. There is a conflict going on in our country between the old order and the new, between the school of orthodoxy and that of heterodoxy, between the lovers of Original civilization and those of Western civilization. You will soon find it impossible to resist the temptation to join this conflict. On what side will you throw in the weight of your opinion, influence and power? If you are to play a useful part in the movement of social reform, you have to make a careful study of the social conditions and realise the wisdom of replacing unhealthy customs by healthy and useful reforms for the promotion of the well-being of your fellowmen. The insanitary condition abounding everywhere and causing, directly or indirectly, much of preventable suffering and mortality, the profuse expenditure on family or domestic ceremonies leading to overwhelming debts, the unwillingness of parents in rural areas to send their grown up girls for education—all these and many others are matters that ought to engage your serious attention. Men and women of education should take a leading part in reforms that are calculated to make the people more healthy, happy and prosperous. Remember the advice of the poet :

Be useful where thou livest, that they may  
Both want, and wish thy pleasing presence still.  
Kindness, good parts, great places are the way  
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will  
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less,  
To the one joy of doing kindness.

Our ancestors were remarkable for the two excellent qualities of "plain living" and "high thinking" and these qualities once made them great and famous. But we in this age of contact with the Western civilization, have shown a tendency to live a life of luxury, spending much of our substance on the non-essentials of existence. In the Convocation Address of 1884 the Honourable W. R. Cornish told the graduates of the year :

"I would not have you depart from the simple habits, inherited from a long line of ancestors, and which the experience of countless generations has proved to be best suited to the inhabitants of tropical lands. Food and clothing must vary in different countries, as climate and other conditions vary, but in adhering to the simplicity of life practised by your forefathers, you will have the sanction and approval of some of the most eminent of modern scientists, who have come to the conclusion that alcoholic drinks and strong meats are not essential to health, life, or mental and physical vigour, while the abuse of strong drinks, at any rate, has proved a curse to the Northern peoples. I would have you, in this words of the poet,

"Keep all thy native good, and naturalize  
All foreign of that name; but scorn their ill."

These are words uttered in this very hall by an Englishman, and not a Congressman. Shall I not today repeat this appeal to you, the makers of the New India of our conception?

I am not one of those who will commend or condemn our ancient customs, because they are ancient; nor the Western ideas and habits, because they are Western. Both the East and the West are creations of an all-mighty God, and it would be an act of condemnation of the divine dispensation of things, if we were to condemn the habits of condemning everything that does not belong to our

own age or to our own country. Our ancestors might not have had the benefit of that modern education you have now received, nor enjoyed the fruits of modern scientific developments ; and yet they were men of culture and wisdom. Let us accept whatever is good in the ideas and customs which they have handed down to us, and let us reject only the exotic growth of false ideas and unhealthy customs. Let us accept also whatever is good in thought and life, which the West has to teach us ; and produce a new synthetic culture and life in the New India of our formation. Kipling's couplet may still be our guide, safe and sound ;

East in East,  
West in West ;  
But East plus West  
Is much the best.

You know, though you see it dimly through the ages, that your country occupied in the ancient past a position of glory which other nations envied. Once upon a time she was great, civilized and honoured, when the ancestors of the modern European nations were still steeped in barbarism, when Greece and Rome and Britain were names hardly known beyond the waters that surround them. Let me not sing the praises of my own country ; let foreign testimony bear witness to the truth. Addressing the young men before him, Mr. George Smith said in 1870 :

"Man, it has been well said, is by nature and universally an artizan and an artist ; and nowhere can this fact be more abundantly illustrated than here in India. In this as in many other respects the West is but the daughter of the East, though each retains her own marked individuality. The mother, however, has charms of her own, charms of antiquity, originality, grace and harmony of colour, which the daughter strives in vain to equal. Look at the textile, manual and mechanical arts of India ; the 'webs of woven air' ; the embroidered fabrics unequalled for delicacy and design. Look at the skill of the workmen of Shimoga in carving in sandalwood, of those of Travancore in ivory, of the goldsmiths of Trichinopoly, the silversmiths of Cuttack. These and many others of the manufactures of this land exhibit remarkably that instinctive—let me add hereditary—artistic taste, and that artistic eye for form, ornament and bloom of colour, which have gained for Indian arts the admiration of world..... Never forget that India was a civilized, an artistic and an industrial nation when Abraham left his native Ur of the Chaldees, and that it is through you and others deeply interested in this land, that the latent capabilities of its intelligent and teachable people are to be evoked, so that your native land may once more take her ancient and most distinguished position among the philosophic, the artistic and the industrial nations of the world."

A similar testimony was given by another outsider in 1872. Mr. Henry Fortey said in the course of his Convocation address :

"You should live and labour as you have been adjured to do, for the sake of India, your country. Forget not her ancient fame. Forget not that literature and philosophy and art had here their home and Athens had arisen to keep watch on the Blue Aegean, when the seven hills of Rome stood still lonely by the Tiber. Remember that on you and such as you depends whether India is ever to regain the place of leadership that she had lost. Yes, my young friends ; on you depends the elevation of young Motherland to the position she once occupied. That venerable Mother of glorious past is calling out to you, to each and every one of you, to revive her ancient glories. Will you, sons and daughters of an ancient and illustrious Mother, turn a deaf ear to her pathetic and pressing call ? Will you not make her once more the centre of the world, the centre of world's culture and art ?"

Let me conclude by drawing your attention to another important responsibility of yours as sons and daughters of this ancient land of spirituality. Along with many economic-political "isms" like Socialism, Communism and Bolshevism—all alike un-Indian in their outlook on life, three other socio-religious "isms" are creeping into our land—indifferentism, agnosticism and atheism. To what depths of degradation should our land of spirituality have fallen in order to afford therein a fertile growth for these dangerous "isms" of modern life. You are men of culture ; if so, let the rays of these "isms" be passed through the prism of your cultured mind, let each one discover for himself the rays of truth that a perplexed and confounded world cannot see. Remember, India was great when India was religious, a land of high spirituality ; and you who are its leaders



of thought and action, to lead India back to her ancient position cannot build up her greatness and glory without the foundation of religion and spirituality.

My young friends, my last appeal and request to you is to be religious; in prosperity as well as in adversity let religion have its softening influence on you. In all your service to your country, let the ultimate motive be the progress and well-being of your fellow-men, out of charity to them and out of gratitude to the Great Supreme God who has brought you, by His invisible light, to the position of honour and responsibility you occupy to-day. Your devoted service to your fellow-men be an act of thanksgiving to the all-wise, all-good, all-powerful God, who knows all things and sees all things, whom truly to know and faithfully to serve is present peace and everlasting happiness. May all of you, with Divine Grace, serve faithfully and devotedly your country and your God, as cultured members of your illustrious University and as worthy citizens of your glorious Motherland.

## The Bombay University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Mr. R. P. Masani Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, before the annual Convocation of the University on the 15th August 1939 :—

There are moments when one keenly feels the want of words to give adequate expression to one's emotions. This is one such moment for me. As I stand before you to address you from this place, I feel myself deeply stirred by feelings of gratification and thankfulness that by virtue of the office to which you, Mr. Chancellor, have been pleased to call me, my connexion with my Alma Mater should be closer and the opportunity to serve her greater than before.

Twelve months have rolled by since the date of the last Convocation, twelve months of alarms and excursions unprecedented in history. Never before was the world on notice, for so long a time, of the threat of war hanging over it; never before was it so disordered and distraught. A regular epidemic of race arrogance and race antagonism, envy, hatred and lust of power has spread over some of the most advanced countries, undermining the basis of civilized society and free association of scholars, and shattering all hope of enlightened adaptability and harmony essential for world-fellowship and cultural co-operation.

Into the serene atmosphere of a University the heated air of politics should not enter. In the totalitarian states, however, even the academic atmosphere is politicized. The humanistic ideal of old has given place to an anti-social political ideal, called national. In pursuance of that ideal the university curriculum has been remodelled to suit what is introduced as the new "ideology", and to meet what are called national needs. The realm of science knows no territorial or national boundaries; but in the mad world of to-day even science loses its international character. "In reality", says one of the exponents of the new ideology, "science, like every other human product, is racial and conditioned by blood." Hence the title of his book, *Deutsche Physik*. The doctrine that all learning must be subordinated to the pressing needs of national life makes the universities mere tools in the hands of the dictators of the hour. The professors and the pupils are but pawns in the intriguing game of politics. Owning allegiance only to pure science and learning, the German Universities were once noted for their detachment from any particular creed or school of thought. They recognized no master other than Truth. What a fall for these and other seats of learning in Europe, those citadels of truth, those bulwarks of civilization!

It is not my purpose to enter into an argument this evening on the policy of thus revolutionizing the relationship between the Government and the University. I merely wish to call attention to what I consider the greatest peril facing the world to-day, particularly the generation now at school or college. What one learns during the most formative period of one's existence sticks. The propaganda now carried on in countries whose governmental policies are rooted in racial prejudices and whose educational institutions are permeated by the spirit of narrow nationalism must produce men and women whose blood will tingle and mount at their throats whenever they think or hear of the people whom they have been taught to despise and distrust. Our educational institutions are, happily, free from the domination of principles of "enlightenment" revealing in the doctrine of control of thought, regimentation of studies and manipulation

of public opinion. Nevertheless, may I, as one who has thought his life refused to be drawn into the vortex of party politics, as one who is merely interested in securing the proper academic atmosphere for the upbringing of the youth of our country, ask those people who have been incessantly preaching the puny gospel of communalism, whether the juvenile population of India is not also in danger of being similarly influenced by perverted notions, lowering the ideals of education and civilization?

We have also to beware of another danger threatening the intellectual development of the rising generation—the danger of revolutionary changes in the system of education and curricula of studies in moments of feverish enthusiasm for reform. With the introduction of Provincial Autonomy in India there has been a welcome change in the outlook of Provincial Governments on educational problems. Their enthusiasm is reflected in the general demand for radical changes in the matter as well as the manner of education. Before, however, the existing structure is pulled down, there should be a well thought-out plan of the edifice proposed to be reared in its place. This essential condition of reform has not been overlooked by the Bombay Government. After having appointed several committees, they have decided to take action in certain directions; other proposals for reconstruction are still under investigation.

The latest proposals for reform in secondary schools contemplate a lower secondary stage with compulsory manual training, and a higher secondary stage preparatory both for the universities and for vocational work, to be provided for in "intermediate college". I for one would welcome any reform that might be agreed upon on these lines. Mean-while, the Government of Bombay have decided to hold a separate competitive examination for entrance into Government service. If this examination could be popularised as an examination for a school leaving certificate, the complaint that the Matriculation has grown unwieldy and become an incubus upon the life of the school should disappear. The University would then be concerned only about the schools preparing students for its entrance examination. On the question of supervision of such schools we have had an argument with Government. We have also our differences with Government on the question of amendment of the University Act regarding the constitution and administration of the Senate and other matters. As a result of recent negotiations, however, I visualize a satisfactory settlement.

Happily, our University is, and I trust, will ever remain free from external pressure. In our Chancellor we have a pillar of democracy and an enlightened custodian of the interests of higher education. Our interests and our freedom of action are safe in his hands. In our Prime Minister, also, who is in charge of the portfolio of Education, we have an ardent exponent of democracy. We are proud to claim him as one of us, not only as one of the Fellows of the University, but also as an illustrious product of our Alma Mater. Another member of the Cabinet, the Honourable the Minister for Home Department, is also one of us, and he has been a shining light of this University for more than thirteen years. With these three luminaries, providentially placed in auspicious positions in the educational firmament, one may easily predict a bright future for the progress of higher education. The Honourable the Prime Minister convened recently a conference of representatives of both sides to discuss several matters concerning secondary as well as university education. They will meet again and, with goodwill on both sides, we may look forward to an era of sound and stabilizing reform.

As regards the Matriculation examination, it must be admitted that it is becoming increasingly difficult to conduct it to the satisfaction of the Senate. It is likely to hold the field even after Government institute the school-leaving examination. Its dimensions will still render organization an uniformity of standards extremely difficult. In an article recently contributed to the *Times of India*, advocating the constitution of a Special Board for this Examination, Mr. E. P. Paranjape, the ex-Vice-Chancellor of Lwowski University, observed that when he appeared at the Matriculation examination in the year 1891, there were only 1,000 candidates and that they could then be certain that they were all weighed in the same balance. As one who sat for the same examination only a year later, I have a different story to relate. Far from being certain of receiving we were positively afraid of not receiving uniform treatment. Different examiners examined different groups, and their standards were believed to be widely divergent. One of the examiners in English, an English Professor in a Government College, was an admirer of the French poet *Chateaubriand*. It was reported that even whilst engaged in the important task of

deciding the fate of the examinees, he used to translate into action the poet's admonition to "All the cup that clears : To-day of past regrets and future fears".

That fact in itself was very disconcerting. But there was something more to give us the fright of our life. The story ran that at the fall of night, when it was necessary for the Professor to go from the cup to the couch, and when the unexamined answer-books in large heaps stared him in the face, he would take them in hand, one after another, and get rid of them by assigning marks in each case in proportion to the bulk of the papers. We were solemnly advised to insert blank sheets of paper here and there to increase the weight of our answer-books, and I confess to having acted on such advice on the principle that it was wise to err on the safe side.

The number of candidates has since risen from 3,000 to 21,000. During the present season of piety and the days of abstinence that lie ahead, there is not much danger of the fate of students being thus sealed by a devotee of Bacchus, glass in hand. Nevertheless, certain improvements on past experience will have to be carried out to minimise the vagaries of examiners and the chances of error and disparity in standards. This important question is now engaging the earnest attention of the Syndicate.

Other important reforms are also under consideration ; but I shall merely refer briefly to our programme of expansion. We have been evolving schemes for extending the activities of the University so as to bring it more in touch with the life of the people. Statutes for instituting extension courses in Political Theory, Public Administration, Civics, Psychology, Language and Literature, Art, Journalism and other subjects for the benefit of those who are unable, for financial or other reasons, to pursue the university courses leading to degrees, will shortly be placed before the Senate. Meanwhile a Diploma in Teaching has been instituted and Statute authorizing the institution of a Diploma in Music is awaiting the sanction of the Chancellor. The question of giving diplomas in Painting and Architecture is also under consideration. I hope this will correct the impression outside that Fine Arts are the Cinderella of this University.

Research is the soul of university education. Not infrequently, it adds to the enormous debris of useless knowledge. This, I hope, will never be said of our University Department of Chemical Technology. Every item of research carried out by its staff and students will add to the store of scientific knowledge and the wealth of the country. We are grateful to the present trustees of the Will of the late Mr. P. G. Singhanee for their munificent donation of Rs. 12 lakhs for this Department. May I also take this opportunity to say that, indebted as we are to Mr. V. N. Chandavarkar for his splendid services as Vice-Chancellor during the last six years, he has a special claim on our gratitude for all that he has done to secure financial assistance for this Department and to place it on a stable basis ?

Two other schemes for postgraduate studies have been engaging our attention for some time, one for a postgraduate department of Psychology and Education, and the other for a postgraduate department of Mathematics. We could embark on such schemes only on the supposition that public support would be forthcoming, and I venture to suggest that there can be no better outlet for the stream of benevolence of the public-spirited citizens of the Province than one of the departments of the University, from which generations of students will draw instruction and inspiration for the moral and material progress of their country.

Now, my young friends, on whom the University has conferred degrees this day, let me extend to you my felicitations and introduce myself to you as one who has travelled a long way along the road which lies before you. Looking back over the distance traversed, may I offer you a few hints to guide you on your way ? We now count university students by thousands. Eighty years ago they could be counted by units. The first Matriculation examination was held in 1859, when only 153 candidates presented themselves at the examination. Of these 22 passed—only sixteen per cent. No one then appears to have raised the cry of the slaughter of the innocents. Neither the Chancellor nor the Vice-Chancellor appears to have been oppressed by piteous letters such as they now receive, declaring that there was nothing left for the unfortunate candidate except to commit suicide. Aware as I was that examinations in their present guise have gained far too high a place in public esteem, I had no idea, indeed, that the discomfiture of candidates caused such widespread misery as has been revealed to me during the last three months. The candidate's attempt to cheat may not realise for the moment that an examination is a passing signpost, a merely a passing signpost, only a means to an end.

end. But parents and relations ought to know better. Not a few of them, however, weep with the disconsolate student, as though it were a matter of life and death. Nay, from some of the pathetic letters that I have received I find that it is because many parents look upon the failure of their sons and daughters as a terrible calamity, or as a mark of disgrace, that the unfortunate students are driven to despair. To all unsuccessful students I would say this : While success at an examination is regarded as a proof of attainment of the required standard of ability, failure does not necessarily imply lack of intelligence or industry ; much less lack of ability to earn one's bread. University authorities are human ; examiners are human ; accidents happen every moment of our lives. I have seen many brilliant students returned unsuccessful. They tried again and came out with flying colours. Vicissitudes and reverses in life have to be met with steel-like determination to win in the end. Even if one does not win, the very effort to succeed is a gain. If a student has not frittered away his time, even though he fails to get a degree, his learning abides, and his capacity to earn his livelihood is not impaired. The object of higher education is primarily to prepare students for life and only incidentally for livelihood. I know that there is a difference of opinion on this point. Some hold that the practical necessities of life should take precedence of the intellectual. Others would subordinate "bread and butter studies" to cultural courses. Lord Brougham looked forward to the day when the poor man in England after the labour of the day, would refresh himself by reading Bacon. Much more to the purpose, said William Cobbet, if the time came when every man in England would eat bacon. Most of the people who now demand a radical change in the existing system of education which would enable every man in India to earn his bread, and stand erect on his own feet. As a matter of fact, broadly speaking, the bulk of university teaching is vocational. Students join colleges with liberal professions in mind. The cry now is to prepare them for all sorts of crafts and small industries. We should be mindful, however, of the difference between preparing for life and preparing for livelihood. It would be fatal if the distinction between a University and a Technical Institute were blurred.

The highest gift which a University can impart to you is that disciplined thinking and understanding which go to form not only a strong intellect but also a strong character, and it is character, singleness of purpose and manly spirit more than the ability to win a prize, or to secure a degree or a diploma, that count. Your presence, your manners, your outlook on life, your attitude towards your neighbours, your ability to do your work efficiently and, above all, your reputation for independence and integrity—these will bring you success in life, and, more than success, the respect, wherever you are placed.

You are going out into the world at a time when India has arrived at a very critical stage in her political evolution. Vital decisions will have to be taken shortly ; widely divergent views will have to be adjusted ; heterogeneous elements of the vast population welded into a unified nation. What does the public expect you to do to facilitate the transition to the new order ? It expects you to show a true sense of values, values which constitute the grace of life, and to bring disciplined reasoning and sound judgment to bear on the complicated problems that will arise. Indeed, what India needs to-day is a growing class of intelligent, independent, high-toned men and women who can see clearly for themselves what is to be urged on both sides of a question and be helpful in promoting mutual understanding and creating an informed public opinion.

All education is valueless if students are not trained to correct modes of thinking and reeducation. Our Colleges, however, do not appear to attach sufficient importance to this aspect of academic training. Instead of making it a point to encourage independent thinking and sound judgment, not a few professors expect that their pupils should be uncritically susceptible to their views ! An amusing illustration of such a tendency is given by Sir Philip Hartog. He once asked a candidate for a university post at Dacca : "If, after hearing your lecture on an admittedly controversial subject, a student comes to you and says, 'I am sorry, Sir, I do not share your views. I think so and so', what would you say to him ?" The candidate replied : "I would tell the student that he had no right to an opinion of his own ; he should sit at the feet of his teacher." This reply would be fatal to his candidature.

When I stand for cultivation of powers of independent thought, please do not run away with the idea that you are asked to ignore the authority of teachers or enlightened writers or sources of thought. We all need guidance from them, but

in selecting your guides you should exercise a wise discrimination. "There are many echoes in the world", says Goethe, "but few voices". Do not take the echoes for the voices. Within the time allotted to you make the most of the company of great minds. Be a student all your life and, whenever possible, attend university extension lectures, or rather courses and classes for the cultural advancement of the people. One cannot think of a better investment of leisure. In this connexion I should like to give you an inspiring anecdote. An officer of the Bombay Army utilized his leisure during his furlough to attend certain classes in the University of Edinburgh. He generally sat beside an old man who was conspicuous for his keen and diligent attention to the lecture. That companion, he discovered one day, to his amazement, was Mountstuart Elphinstone, who after his retirement as Governor of Bombay, had dedicated his time to learning and literary work and had twice refused the Governor-Generalship of India.

Independent thinking should not be confused with defiance of authority or resistance to law. "Why should I obey?" is the question now on the lips of some people who are in revolt against the policy of Prohibition initiated by the Bombay Government. Without entering into the merits of the action taken by the Government, without disputing the right of a free citizen to protest against any measure with which he is not in agreement, may I call attention to the fundamental considerations out of which springs the obligation to obey law? Of the individual member of society who frets under the new enactment, may I ask: Whence have you acquired that strong sense of personality which now asserts itself in opposition to law? Does it not come from your corporate life, from your identification with the entire community? Has not your country enhanced your personal value and conferred on you the rights of citizenship?

"A man's relations to his fellows are not addenda to his personality," said Professor Henry Jones, forty-one years ago, in an article on *Social and Individual Evolution* in the *New World*, "but are the inmost content and reality of it. He cannot act as a rational being, except by incorporating them. Man grows as an individual, he deepens his private personality, by converting its higher tendencies into his rational purpose". Herein lies the justification of the claim of the law upon the conscience of all the members of a civilized society whose legislative functions on a democratic basis. The laws it passes merely express the people's own sense of responsibility for their own lives and conduct. In obeying them, a member of a democratic society merely obeys his own self.

There are occasions, however, when the law overrides one's conscience instead of being in harmony with it. The question arises: How are the rights of the majority to be reconciled with those of a minority? Ordinarily, the majority has the right to demand that it should be allowed to give effect to its policy and decisions. It is, no doubt, likely to commit mistakes, but to it alone, and not to any self-constituted authority, can the right to make mistakes be conceded. Any other theory of government would mean coercion or frustration of the majority by a smaller group or groups. At the same time, the minority has the right to convert the majority to its point of view. This it can do by persuasion, or agitation, meanwhile bowing to the will of the majority, or, in rare cases, even by resisting the law. As in other matters, so in law, there are certain objective standards of right and wrong. If, for instance, the majority seeks to impose its will on the minority by restraining the freedom of the people to hold meetings, or to make speeches, or to oppose in the public press the policy of the authorities for the time being, the resistance of the minority may take the form of a breach of law. If, to take another instance, a law is so outrageous as to offend one's sense of ethical values or to undermine the basis of society, one would expect an educated and intelligent body of citizens to offer resolute resistance. Such cases are, however, rare, and it would, surely, be wrong to include in this category social legislation for the protection of people from the ruinous consequences of social scourges. It is no doubt, easy on such occasions for individuals to cry that civil liberty is in danger and to condemn the law as unjust because their personal will bent on individual self-interest is being infringed, because it is against the higher social will. But they know that their conduct in conscience repudiates it. Such legislation may be an unnecessary restriction, but it seems inevitable and unavoidable; it may even be objectionable on grounds of policy or expediency, but it is certainly not something which can be ignored or politically manipulated. It is a law which would, possibly, when it comes to the point of enforcement, be met in the interests of the community.

The fact that the conscience of the majority is in tune with the law ought to silence all further opposition once it is put on the Statute Book. Otherwise, democracy becomes a mockery. Democracy, I need not tell you, presupposes a sense of solidarity and loyalty to common interests strong enough to admit of the decision of the majority being peacefully accepted. My young friends, I appeal to you to-day, in the name of our Alma Mater, in the name our country, in the name of all that is dear to you, to raise that sense of solidarity to a sort of religion and that sense of loyalty to a sort of spiritual faith. May I also appeal to you to remember always that disapproval of the action of the majority should not be allowed to stifle one's sense of propriety. Agitate by all means, whenever necessary, but do not join those who, on such occasions, give shocking demonstrations of unabashed adult individualism, opportunism and rowdiness. The right of "self-expression" is urged by them in self-defence, but the self is not worth expressing or defending unless self-mastery comes first.

Young men and women of to-day, ye hope and promise of to-morrow, I do not know that I can recognise in you a band of devoted servants of society. We cannot all be great men, but great deeds are within the reach of all. Great deeds include simple acts of kindness and social service. Be our sphere of influence what it may, be it small or be it large, there is sure to be ample scope in it for loving service to humanity. If you wish that in future years, you may be able to look back over the distance traversed, without remorse, and feel happy for having lived a full and complete life, my advice to you is: join some group, club or organization affording scope for social service. If your college has a welfare league, take an active part in its work. If there be none, get your fellow students to form one. Join also some other group run by older members of society, preferably a cosmopolitan association. Establishing contact and collaborating with tried men and women, you will learn the principles of corporate life and co-operation and acquire the team-spirit essential for working jointly with others.

I would not, however, advise you to be in a hurry to join a political party. By all means take an interest in politics, but take time before you decide to throw in your lot with any particular political party. Keep yourself free to approach great issues affecting the progress and happiness of your countrymen, uninfluenced by the bias of party ties or of party passions. Remember that on the day you join a party you pledge your word that that party's thoughts and convictions shall also be your thoughts and convictions. There will be time enough to plunge into the whirlpool of party politics, if you care to, and even then you will be lucky if you do not find that you have fettered your judgment and mortgaged your independence.

After you pass out from the University, do not miss a single opportunity to join a useful organization and to make yourself helpful to society. Repay, while there is time and opportunity, the debt you owe to it. What a golden opportunity now awaits you to assist in the work of spreading literacy among the masses of this country and educating the adult population generally! These people are, literally, thirsting for knowledge. May it be given to each one of you to quench the thirst of at least a small group of them! Never ask, "where is the time?" That is the refuge of the idler and the shirker, who though he lives rich and dies rich dies a debtor to society. Among the papers of Sir William Jones, famous linguist, Judge of the Supreme Court and founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was once discovered a slip of paper on which he had inscribed a couplet, showing how he divided the twenty-four hours of the day. I commend that couplet to you in the hope that it may be a source of inspiration to you:

"Seven hours to law, to soothing-slumber seven,  
Ten to the world allot, and all to heaven!"

## The Annamalai University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Mr. H. C. Papworth, Principal, Madras Presidency College, at the annual Convocation of the Annamalai University held at Chidambaram on the 28th October 1922.

It was a very great honour to me to receive an invitation from His Excellency the Governor to deliver the Convocation Address this year on the Degree Day of the University. It has been my privilege to be a member of Annamalai University since its foundation ten years ago, and it is a source of great pride

to me that His Excellency has been pleased to appoint me a member of the Syndicate of the University for a fourth period of service. I am, of course, very conscious that the benefits which I have received from my experience on that Body far outweigh in value any services that I can have rendered to the University.

I crave your indulgence for these personal allusions, but I have made them for this reason—that I want you to feel that you are being addressed to-day, not by an eminent outsider, but by a fellow-member of your own University, who naturally has at heart both your welfare and also the reputation and good report of the University which now lie largely in your hands.

In this address I am not going to weary you with an account of the history and progress of education in India, nor give you a resume of what are commonly called educational problems. These, I know, have been topics with which others, honoured by an invitation to address a University Convocation, have often dealt; and the air is thick with the dust of past and present educational controversies. I sometimes think that we have discussed educational problems *ad nauseam*, and the dust we have raised has blinded us, so that we have stood still, unable to progress because of the very pillars of dust that our endless controversies have raised. You, new graduates of the University, will want to be up and doing, so I prefer to offer you a few words of help as to how to use the equipment the University has given you, and as to what the society in which you will live for the rest of your lives expects, and has a right to expect, from men and women endowed with your privileges.

A University is a Society created by rightful authority for the impartation of the higher branches of learning. Society, therefore, will expect you to be erudite. You have had opportunities of sound learning, and those with whom you come in contact and those whom you teach will expect your knowledge to be sound and reliable. Continue your reading, ever widening its orbit, so that the soundness and reliability of your learning may not fail. You must also be modest in your learning; there is no creature on earth more objectionable than the intellectual snob. Remember that the subjects you have studied and in which you have specialised here are not the whole of knowledge; they are not the last word that Truth can reveal. You must apprehend by experience, by contact with others and by friendly exchange of views the place of your knowledge in relation to the infinite world of Truth. Remember that no one nation, no one religion, no one society or constitution has a monopoly of truth. Eschew therefore intellectual pride and be eager and willing to absorb new knowledge and new ideas wherever you find them. Change your views and your opinions whenever the revelation of new knowledge and new truths requires it; and don't be ashamed to admit that you have done so.

Addison once said "the intrinsic value of an old coin does not consist in its erudition." He was using the word here to mean perfect workmanship. Your University's first gift to you is erudition; and I would say to you, Be modest in your learning, but be thorough and reliable in your application of it; that is, in your workmanship.

The second gift which your University offers you is Culture, which, though not an inseparable companion of erudition, may by assiduous training be an accompaniment of it. By Culture we mean the cultivation or training of the mind of man, his mental faculties, his tastes and his manners. When the development of a man's mind, his tastes and his manners has reached a level which we may describe by the word 'refinement', that man has reached a state which we call 'cultured'.

In the attainment of this condition which I have called 'refinement', it is necessary that all the three mentioned faculties should together have reached that level. Intellectual brilliance, without a concomitant cultivation of tastes and manners is not culture. Intellectual superiority, mental cleverness, which makes a man what we call 'brilliant', may be, and sometimes is, combined with vulgar tastes and boorish manners; and thus the person merely equipped with intellectual brilliance is sometimes most offensive. A cultured man is never offensive. At the same time, it is not that it is possible to cultivate our tastes and manners to a stage of refinement without the aid of a well-trained, well-disciplined and well-educated intellect. "Culture," said Matthew Arnold, "is the cultivation of the mind with the intellect as its basis and guide in the world." The intellect is necessary, but it is not sufficient; it must be guided in the world by the cultivation of tastes and manners. It is not a mere possession of facts and data, but an understanding of the world.

judgment upon the best that has been said and known in the world. Not carping, prejudiced and offensive criticism upon the best that others have done or said or given, but an informed and kindly judgment; a free play of the mind amongst the green pastures so carefully cultivated by the best of those who have gone before us. These may be found in the great classics, the sciences, the discoveries, the literature, the religions, the philosophies, the music, the paintings, the sculptures, and in many other compartments of that great treasure chest of knowledge, which is our inheritance. In order to attain the refinement of a cultured mind, a man or woman must have delved fairly thoroughly at least into some of these intellectual treasures; for culture is not compatible with ignorance.

As with a cultured man's mind, so with his tastes; they too will be of refinement. A man's tastes are his likings—the things he likes, the things he appreciates. His upbringing, his education, his reading, his experience, his hobbies, and perhaps most of all his friendships, will have made him like what is good and beautiful, and hate what is bad and ugly. And he will have acquired an instinctive perception of the difference between what is good and what is bad, and between what is beautiful and what is ugly. This, I think, is what is meant by cultured or refined tastes.

Many people, of course, have no perception of the difference between beauty and ugliness. In architecture, for instance, positive ugliness makes no impression upon some people. You have only to look at the houses they build, the churches they put up, and the way they furnish them or ornament them. In music, many have no discernment; in literature, no taste; in the arts generally, no knowledge, and hence no interest. But the refinement of taste is an essential in culture. There is, of course, no fixed hall-mark by which this level can be recognised. But evidence of it can be discerned—in the things with which a man surrounds himself; the books he reads; the furniture he uses; the music he likes; the friends he makes; and perhaps in his dress, for, if he has good taste, he won't over-do the colour scheme or exaggerate the fashion.

Likewise, too, in manners, the cultured man will not over-do them, nor be affected. The refinement of his manners will be natural, not forced or artificial. He will have charm and will naturally put others at their ease. He will not cause embarrassment. He will easily associate with anyone, and others will find no difficulty in associating with him. Truly, a cultured man

"Can talk with crowds and keep his virtue,

Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch."

A cultured man or woman, therefore, will be erudite, of deep and extensive reading, and of catholic tastes and interests. But he will be free from fanaticism, for his enthusiasms will be tempered by breadth of knowledge and vision. His well-trained and disciplined mind will be flexible like a sword of fine-tempered steel, the true kind of flexibility, which neither breaks under a strain, nor sacrifices to any expediency its faith and its principles, which are its power. Further to these two gifts of erudition and culture which your University offers you, there is another without which they will be of small avail; that is, the gift of integrity.

*Integrity* means something complete, entire, unimpaired, and so in its application to our gifts and our use of them it means uprightness, honesty and fair dealing with all men; steadily pursuing the path that lies before us, looking neither to the right nor to the left. You have promised today that you will promote the causes of morality and sound learning, and that you will uphold and advance social order and the well-being of your fellow men. In Madras University, which is your mother university, the graduates also promise that they will maintain the purity and reputation of the callings which they may follow, and that they will not deviate from the straight path of their honourable exercise by making their knowledge, that is all their gifts, subservient to unworthy ends. Make this promise also your own, and remember these promises; for they are sometimes forgotten. There is nothing more tragic than to see a professional man in disgrace, or to see a gifted man in power or position using his gifts, his power or his patronage unrightfully. *Erudition, Culture and Integrity*: with these three gifts a man may well reach a high position in his life or in his profession; but he will do nothing common or mean in his search for distinction. Thus endowed, you may go far, and your work for humanity may be of infinite worth.

We are living in troubled times, and the spectre of war has once again appeared and will surely bring its attendant horrors. All the efforts which have been made, and they have been many, to preserve the peace of the world have failed.



Even the most concerted effort in this direction, the League of Nations, is amongst the failures. The League has failed, perhaps because it represented the governments of the nations and not their peoples, so that Geneva became the meeting place of rival national ambitions and economic clashes, rather than of the good will which, in spite of appearances, is latent amongst the peoples of the world. Where nations and religions have failed, is it possible for the great sisterhoods of learning to come closer together and to find opportunities of service to humanity? The universities of the world, those great aristocracies of learning, have kept so much to themselves and have never exploited those vast opportunities of service to mankind, which, if they could only come together, they would surely find. Amongst universities all would be friends and allies: there would be no enemies. If the best men and women of the world's universities could get together and broadcast their messages, they surely could convince the world, in the words of Lord Althorp over a hundred years ago, "that the phantoms of national glory and national triumph were not worthy the expense of blood and treasure by which they must be purchased." This experiment has never been tried; this league of erudition, culture and integrity has never been formed; but I put it to you as a suggestion worthy of your thought. What an incalculable and lasting service it would be to all mankind if the universities of the world could liberate that good will which, as I have said, is latent amongst the peoples of the world. In the re-establishment of peace which must surely come, old methods may again fail. Above all other classes of men and women, cannot the universities, if they will, speak and be heard across the barriers of nations?

## The Andhra University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Sir Nilratan Sircar at the Annual Convocation of the Andhra University held at Bezwa on the 7th. October 1939 :-

I am thankful to His Excellency the Chancellor of the Andhra University for inviting me to address the Convocation.

My mind spontaneously goes back at this moment to the day when the great Bengali religious teacher, Sri Chaitanya, visited this sequestered region more than four centuries ago, to preach the gospel of Vaishnavism and by his intimate association with all classes of people, among whom he worked and lived, he forged a link that binds it to my Province. There are hints in accounts of his southern travel that he met powerful Vaishnava and Buddhist leaders on the Godavari side, which perhaps partially covered the Andhra territory. He also came in contact with many scholars of the Tamil race. Sri Chaitanya met many renowned scholars like Ram Gita, a Buddhist leader, Dhundiram Tirtha of the Tungabhadra region, Mathur Pandit, a Ramayata Vaishnava of Tripadi, Madhavendra Bhuj of the Narsing temple and Bharga Deb of Tripatra. Sri Chaitanya's spiritual ministrations were greatly appreciated over a large tract of country from Puri to Rameswaram, which certainly comprised among others, parts of the Andhra country. He not only spread his religion there, but coming across two great works, the *Brahma Samhita* and *Karnada*, discovered by him somewhere on the banks of the Krittimala, he got a new impulse in his emotional experiences, and enriched his imported knowledge with his own interpretations.

I desire, at the outset, to refer to the wish for a separate autonomous Province that is uppermost in the minds of the people of Andhradesa. This is, I believe, a genuine and legitimate aspiration. You ask for this constitutional change wholeheartedly for an adequate development of the part of the country inhabited by Telugu-speaking people. A glimpse into the proud record of the political and cultural achievements of the people of Andhradesa in the past fully justifies your ambition. Although your very just demand has, for the present, been rejected, it may be hoped that in view of the influential support that the project of an autonomous Andhra province has already received from different quarters, it will be realised before long, when you will have an opportunity for self-expression to the fullest possible extent.

The establishment of your University may, in fact, be taken to be a sign of the desire of the people of Andhradesa to take into their own hands the development of the cultural side of their activities and direct them along channels that would be conducive to the sound and adequate growth. It is gratifying to find that

within the short space of thirteen years you have been able to make very substantial progress, and that in addition to the moral and intellectual support that you have received, the provincial Government, generous and public-spirited citizens and enlightened public bodies have come forward to back up your efforts by suitable financial support. The Maharaja of Jeypore has laid us under a deep debt of gratitude by his princely benefactions. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the present resources of the University are quite incommensurate with its needs, and that if it is to be enabled to fulfil its obligations even to a limited extent, ampler and more liberal resources must be forthcoming.

It is encouraging to find in this connexion some of the local bodies in your area contributing to the funds of the University. The example set by the Madras Government in accepting the principle that local bodies might contribute liberally to the University and that no objection would be raised by them except on grounds of financial inability is worthy of emulation by other Provincial Governments.

I desire to offer you my sincerest congratulations on the emphasis that you have been able to place on the conduct of research. Your record of researches carried on by teachers of the University, both from the points of view of quality, brings you credit and confers on you distinction. That the teachers have been able to carry on research in such a wide variety of subjects as Economics, Commerce, History, Politics, Philosophy, Telugu Literature and different branches of Physics, Chemistry, Technology and Medical Sciences, and also to contribute original papers on them, apart from serving as an inspiration to students, is a very hopeful augury for the future development of the University. The results of your experiment of creation of new Chairs for really capable and competent persons, on a modest scale of remuneration, will certainly be watched with very great interest. If the experiment be successful, it would help the diffusion of higher education much faster than might otherwise be expected. The proposal for establishment of new technological courses in various subjects is a step in the right direction. It is gratifying to note that the Technological Department has won the Government of India prize for sugar technology.

I am happy to find that you desire to give to music a recognized place among the subjects of study. This will be widely appreciated because of its value in awakening and developing the aesthetic faculty, which is an important human gift. In fact a training in music has been found by educationalists to be almost as important as the training of the intellect through languages, science, mathematics. You are extremely fortunate in having a special advantage over others in this matter on account of the exceptional aptitude for music with which people of Andhradesa are endowed. I hope that the wise step taken by you in this matter will be followed in other Provinces.

While dealing with the future lines of development of the University, your last report refers to the question of educational reconstruction. It appears that some time ago the Government of your Province addressed you on the subject of Secondary and University education and that after due consideration you communicated to the Government your views on the problems involved. They subsequently informed you that it was their desire to give early effect to the scheme they had formulated on the subject. This involved the elimination of the Intermediate classes and extension of the degree course by a year. The new proposal, no doubt, meant, a very important change.

In some of the other Provinces also changes of a similar nature have been advocated. In fact, the need of educational reconstruction in all its stages is being canvassed all over the country, and the question has engaged the attention of a host of educational experts and authorities and been discussed from widely different view points. There can be no doubt that the time is quite ripe for a thorough overhauling of the entire educational system in India and with the introduction of provincial autonomy it should be possible to introduce a well-planned and properly integrated scheme of education from the lowest to the highest stage. In order that any reform that may be introduced in your scheme of studies may be effective it is of absolute importance that those responsible for primary and secondary education should be induced to take the needed step for improvement and reform along with any measures of reconstruction that may be undertaken in the upper stages. In order that a modern University may be able to fulfil its purposes in a proper manner and on an adequate scale, it is necessary that there should be a clear understanding of the conception of general liberal education, the University being the chief educational authority responsible for securing such education in

its area of operation. This is needed in view of the fact that there has been a considerable difference of opinion even among eminent educationalists as to what constitutes liberal education since the days Plato and Aristotle expressed their ideas on the subject. It is contended by certain critics that any education other than purely literary and purely scientific cannot be included in any scheme of general liberal education and that such education is beyond the scope of any university. This has resulted in considerable loose thinking as to the relative importance of purely literary and scientific studies on the one hand and studies of so-called utilitarian or non-cultural subjects on the other. There is also much confusion of thought as to how far the university is the proper authority for imparting technical education.

Prof. A. N. Whitehead in his work, *The aims of Education and Other Essays*, (1929), refers to the subject at some length. A national system of education, Prof. Whitehead thinks, should make use of three main methods, namely, the literary curriculum, the scientific curriculum, and the technical curriculum and that each of these curricula should include the other two. "What I mean is" he adds "that every form of education should give the pupil a technique, a science, an assertion of general ideas, and aesthetic appreciation, and that each of these sides of his training should be illuminated by the others. Lack of time, even for the most favoured pupil, makes it impossible to develop fully each curriculum. Always there must be a dominant emphasis. The most direct aesthetic training naturally falls in the technical curriculum in those cases when the training is that requisite for some artistic craft. But it is of high importance in both a literary and a scientific education." Explaining further Prof. Whitehead says: "No human being can attain to anything but fragmentary knowledge and a fragmentary training of his capacities. There are, however, three main roads along which we can proceed with good hope of advancing towards the best balance of intellect and character: these are the way of literary culture, the way of scientific culture, the way of technical culture. No one of these methods can be exclusively followed without grave loss of intellectual activity and of character. But a mere mechanical mixture of the three curricula will produce bad results in the shape of scraps of information never interconnected or utilised. We have already noted as one of the strong points of the traditional literary culture that all its parts are co-ordinated. The problem of education is to retain the dominant emphasis, whether literary, scientific, or technical, and with loss of co-ordination to infuse into each way of education something of the other two."

Prof. Whitehead considers that the antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious. In his opinion: "There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical: that is, no education which does not impart both technique and intellectual vision. In simpler language, education should turn out the pupil with something he can do well. This intimate union of practice and theory aids both. The intellect does not work best in a vacuum. The stimulation of creative impulse requires, especially in the case of a child, the quick transition to practice. Geometry and mechanics followed by workshop practice, gain that reality without which mathematics is verbiage."

Your University, I am glad to find, has taken the right course by including technical studies in its curricula. I have taken the liberty of quoting the views of Professor Whitehead, at some length, because he has dealt with the subject in a masterly way. This, it may be expected, should give a proper lead to our universities and strengthen the position of those who desire the universities to undertake on a more systematic and extended scale work in the sphere of applied sciences. A reference to the late Thomas H. Huxley's observations on the subject, expressed more than half a century ago, in his remarkably vigorous and lucid language, will be found both interesting and instructive. When discussing the question with reference to the state of technical education in England, in his time, he urged that the preliminary education of the student pursuing technical courses "shall have been such as to have given him command of the common implements of learning and to have created a desire for the things of the understanding;" that "he should devote the precious hours of preliminary education to things of the mind, which have no direct and immediate bearing on his branch of industry, but which lay at the foundation of all realities;" and that the education that precedes the workshop "should be entirely devoted to the strengthening of the body, the development of the moral faculties, and the cultivation of the intelligence, and especially to the

within the short space of thirteen years you have been able to make very substantial progress, and that in addition to the moral and intellectual support that you have received, the provincial Government, generous and public-spirited citizens and enlightened public bodies have come forward to back up your efforts by suitable financial support. The Maharaja of Jeypore has laid us under a deep debt of gratitude by his princely benefactions. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the present resources of the University are quite incommensurate with its needs, and that if it is to be enabled to fulfil its obligations even to a limited extent, ampler and more liberal resources must be forthcoming.

It is encouraging to find in this connexion some of the local bodies in your area contributing to the funds of the University. The example set by the Madras Government in accepting the principle that local bodies might contribute liberally to the University and that no objection would be raised by them except on grounds of financial inability is worthy of emulation by other Provincial Governments.

I desire to offer you my sincerest congratulations on the emphasis that you have been able to place on the conduct of research. Your record of researches carried on by teachers of the University, both from the points of view of quality, brings you credit and confers on you distinction. That the teachers have been able to carry on research in such a wide variety of subjects as Economics, Commerce, History, Politics, Philosophy, Telugu Literature and different branches of Physics, Chemistry, Technology and Medical Sciences, and also to contribute original papers on them, apart from serving as an inspiration to students, is a very hopeful augury for the future development of the University. The results of your experiment of creation of new Chairs for really capable and competent persons, on a modest scale of remuneration, will certainly be watched with very great interest. If the experiment be successful, it would help the diffusion of higher education much faster than might otherwise be expected. The proposal for establishment of new technological courses in various subjects is a step in the right direction. It is gratifying to note that the Technological Department has won the Government of India prize for sugar technology.

I am happy to find that you desire to give to music a recognised place among the subjects of study. This will be widely appreciated because of its value in awakening and developing the aesthetic faculty, which is an important human gift. In fact a training in music has been found by educationalists to be almost as important as the training of the intellect through languages, science, mathematics. You are extremely fortunate in having a special advantage over others in this matter on account of the exceptional aptitude for music with which people of Andhradesa are endowed. I hope that the wise step taken by you in this matter will be followed in other Provinces.

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imbuing the mind with a broad and clear view of the laws of that natural world with the components of which he will have to deal." Huxley's advice was as valuable as that given by Professor Whitehead now.

Let us turn our attention for a few minutes to medicine and public health on the teaching of which your University has devoted considerable attention.

It is quite possible that in the middle ages the systems of medical treatment prevalent in India were, in many respects, more advanced than those in vogue elsewhere at the time. Although remarkable advances were made by the ancient Indian physicians and surgeons, who laid the foundations of medical science in this country, these savants became bound up, in course of time, by traditions, with the result that knowledge, instead of progressing, actually retrogressed in the subsequent ages, and the effect of this was that no important discoveries and no improvements were made since the ancient treatises were written. The ancient systems, however admirable, in many respects, were necessarily undeveloped, in the absence of a solid foundation of the basic sciences of physics, chemistry, bacteriology, biology, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, hygiene, etc., and ran mostly on speculative lines. The treatment of diseases was necessarily empirical, no corresponding improvement of these sciences having taken place in India during the nineteenth century when remarkable scientific progress was being consolidated in the Western world.

When the British came to India they brought with them some British Surgeons, who held charge of hospitals for British soldiers, chiefly catering to the needs of the army. The need for training Indians in Western medicine arose out of the necessity of having moderately paid Indian assistants to these surgeons. The first medical school after the Western system had been opened in Calcutta in 1824. Between that year and 1835, when the Medical Colleges of Calcutta and Madras were started, medical teaching was imparted in the vernacular by translating English books, as also by assimilating the essential features of the indigenous systems of medicine, by organising teaching through the agency of the Sanskrit and Madrassa Colleges in Calcutta. Although the first two medical colleges established in Calcutta and Madras were founded in 1835, they were affiliated to the University in 1857 and 1893 respectively. But it was not until 1906 that the need for the teaching of the higher standard was recognised. There are now ten University grade Medical Colleges in India, including one exclusively for women.

With the passing of the Indian Medical Council Act in 1933, attempts have been made to raise undergraduate medical teaching to a higher and more uniform standard. The medical curricula have undergone many changes since 1902 when direct connection was established between the Indian Medical College and the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom. The Medical Council of India has recently made mathematics a compulsory subject in the premedical science course of studies, and has suggested that the first two years should be occupied in the study of professional scientific subjects, with an introduction to clinical methods, and that no student should be certified as qualified for attending classes in the clinical group of subjects until he has satisfied the examiners that he has a competent knowledge of the subjects of these two years. The Council has also rightly laid down that throughout the whole period of study the attention of the student should be directed to the importance of the preventive aspects of medicine and of measures for the assessment and maintenance of normal health.

Although the Indian Medical Council has done good work within the short period of its existence, handicap to co-ordinated progress in the teaching of medicine and surgery in India has arisen as a result of the control of this body by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom.

The special needs of India and of Indian students must be kept in view in framing a medical curriculum and in introducing appropriate courses of training. Indian students and Indian conditions should receive special emphasis from the teachers. A fair amount of research work has been carried out by Indian workers on diseases prevalent in this country within the last 4 or 5 decades; hence an Indian orientation to medical teaching can very well be given now, by those who are responsible for the same. Research is the sap of the plant of science. Hence, every teaching institution must encourage research work among its students and teachers. Research into the etiology and pathology of tropical diseases and on diseases, particularly in the domain of indigenous drugs, should receive special attention. With excellent natural advantages which India possesses in regards to her soil, climate and plant life, and with proper and adequate training of young

students in chemistry and allied subjects for handling these and other relevant matters, it should not be necessary for her to depend wholly on imports. Each time a war blockades the communications between the West and the East we realize our helplessness in the matter of the supply of medicinal preparations and chemicals. I hope the young generation which I see before me here will try to remove these wants in a large measure.

A time has come when we should give a public health orientation to medical teaching, and this should be in consonance with the needs and the environment which a student or a medical practitioner or a public health worker will have to deal with. Every medical student should be made to participate in public health activities as part of his training in medicine and public health. Public health diplomas are now granted to medical graduates in various provincial universities, although most of them at the present are post-graduate. Madras and Bombay are the only two Universities which give the B. Sc., degree in Public Health.

Let us now devote a few moments in assessing the number of qualified medical men and public health workers needed to take care of and to rehabilitate the health of 600,000 villages. If we have to supply one qualified doctor and one qualified public health man to a group of three villages, we shall require 200,000 workers of each category to put a well-considered scheme into operation. As a result of scientific medical teaching for the last 100 years, we can now supply 35,000 qualified doctors and only a few hundred public health workers for the above purpose. If we go on at this rate, it will take for us another 200 years to raise India to an up-to-date world level. The need for rapid progress in these directions is, therefore, obvious. As in medical relief, so in public health, we should have field demonstration centres in connection with teaching. These supply a student with a proper outlook about his responsibilities to the community without which he is likely to be a misfit.

The Universities have tried to keep in touch with post-graduate training and research since the opening of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1920 and the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in 1932. While these institutes have many individuals as torchbearers for the rest of India, there is no reason why every university should not encourage the establishment of provincial institutes for the purpose of a quicker output of the number of workers as well as of the volume of work, for every province should need the services of a much larger number of qualified graduates in the near future. It is a happy sign that research work is being carried on in many of the Medical Colleges in India and your College, I am glad to note, takes a prominent part in this.

With the establishment of provincial autonomy in the provinces, efforts are being made to give official recognition to the Ayurvedic, Unani and Homeopathic systems of medicine. The basic science of chemistry, physics, biology, physiology, pathology and bacteriology are the same all over the world. The present tendency to register practitioners of various so-called systems of medicine, lacking systematic scientific training of any sort, is a move in the wrong direction. We do not call a barrister or an advocate now practising in India according to communal denominations. Science is progressive and must be the same throughout the world. The criterion of the right of a doctor to medical practice, or to the privilege of registration, must depend on the basic knowledge he possesses of the fundamental sciences of chemistry, physics, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology and of medicine, surgery, midwifery and other cognate subjects. No system of medicine, Ayurvedic, Unani or any other can get on without the help of modern basic sciences. There should be no spirit of communalism or opportunism or false economy concerning matters of life and death of millions of ignorant and helpless villages whom we have failed to educate or elevate. The question of prevention of epidemic diseases cannot be successfully solved, unless scientific methods of proved efficiency are adopted. How can we apply all the different systems of medicine towards this end? The proper move should be to have only one medical science which has been worked out by the scientists all over the world, incorporating into it whatever good there may be in the medical sciences of the country. If this is done there will be only one medical register in the country which would facilitate the control of medical education and sanitation for the whole country. It is for this reason that I am anxious to discover the essence of the so-called medical systems, physics, chemistry, biology, physiology, pathology, anatomy, surgery, midwifery, etc., and to integrate them into a single medical science.

of the world, she must advance with the help of modern sciences and she must discourage retrograde measures of the sort that are being encouraged in some of the provinces, without fore-thought and imagination.

Among the problems of reform that await solution the most pressing is the use of one's own mother tongue as the medium of instruction in place of the English language. Quite a large proportion of students are now found to be unfitted for the University courses. This proportion has increased considerably with the growth in the number of students taking up college courses. This serves as a serious handicap to proper progress and development. Among the causes of this defect, the very unnatural practice of the use of a foreign tongue as the medium of instruction may be considered to be the most important. Dr. Rabindra nath Tagore describes in his picturesque and inimitable language the serious evils that have resulted from this arrangement. In the course of his Convocation Address at the Calcutta University delivered two years ago he says : "We know of parasitic creatures in the animal world, that live and die in utter dependence on their hosts. They are able to eke out a living, but are forever crippled in the growth of their limbs and organs. Such has been the case with our modern school and college education. It has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that, though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has been obtained at the cost of all round development—so much so, that it has even ceased to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Accustomed to live by borrowing, it has come to measure attainment by largeness of debt : it has signed a bond of servitude to the thinkers of other lands. Those who receive such education cannot produce what they consume. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, their academic success depends on their ability to repeat by rote, and their own faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled. It goes without saying that the only way of revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject-matter of education through one's own language, just as, in order to incorporate food-stuffs into the body, they have to be chewed with one's own teeth, saturated with one's own digestive juices." My university has just adopted the use of Bengali as the medium of instruction as also of examination in place of English in many of the courses in the Arts and Science Faculties. Similar action is needed elsewhere also. In this matter the example of Japan is of classic importance and should give us courage and hope. It is true that there will be difficulties in the beginning, such as preparation of proper text-books, etc., but these, it has been found, are not insurmountable. When medical education for Indians was first introduced by the British, the needed text-books were speedily prepared for the students ; judged by the results of similar use of one's own mother tongue in the study and examination of the medical subjects in the lower standard of medical schools, there can be neither any fear nor any misgiving as to the success of any enterprise in this direction.

I have to address a few words of advice to the recipients of degrees to-day, who are now ready to enter life as responsible citizens. Do not consider that I am presumptuous enough to think that I can say anything new or anything that you do not know. But I should ask you to bear in mind, above everything else, that the chief responsibility for the future progress of the country rests on you youths of India. It is true that you will have to work hard to achieve individual competence and advancement, but true social efficiency can never be attained so long as each individual is not prepared to contribute his best gifts to society and to enjoy advantages which society can offer him. In fact, this process of self-realisation through social life is the best result of the educative process. What is needed, therefore, is that you should foster a life of social service based upon devotion and a proper spirit of sacrifice.

It must be your aspiration, as it is the desire of every Indian who loves his or her motherland, that India should not lag behind any country at the various spheres of her social or national activity. Take, for instance, the problem of educational advance, the basis of all national progress. If India wants to be treated on a footing of equality by the progressive countries of the world, the first thing needed is that the educational backwardness of her people should be removed within the shortest possible time. Other people have shown that it is possible to achieve this result if proper measures are adopted. Now that responsible members of autonomous provinces are empowered to deal with all problems relating to education, our progress in this direction should be rapid. It is possible for you,



young graduates of the university to throw yourselves heart and soul into this noble work and do your bit by helping in various ways the diffusion of enlightenment among the vast masses of your countrymen and countrywomen, who are sunk in abysmal ignorance and in the grossest illiteracy. Educated youngmen in some of the Provinces have already shown the way by undertaking such work. But the problem is of such importance and magnitude as to require a properly devised scheme for comprehensive action throughout the entire country. In this connection it is not out of place to state that among the remedial measures for unemployment among educated men and women adopted by some of the foreign countries, the overhauling and reorganization of the system of schools is one.

Another very important sphere in which young medical graduates can undertake similar welfare work is improvement of public health. I have already spoken on the subject at some length. Those who have gone through the recently published report of the Public Health Commissioner of India must have seen how severe is the havoc and how extreme the suffering that are caused by preventible and remediable diseases in India. It is possible to reduce the heavy mortality very considerably and to give relief to the unparalleled misery and distress that is caused to an incredibly large percentage of the population, to a recent work, *A Century of Municipal Progress*, the editors, Professor Harold J. Laski, and Messrs. W. Ivor Jennings and William A. Robson, of the University of London, describe how during the past hundred years the death rate in England has been halved, the infantile mortality reduced by three quarters, and Cholera which used to be a periodical menace is now considered to be something 'remote and oriental.' They further observe: "One hundred years ago people expected to have the small-pox as now they expect their dogs to have distemper; to-day, on the average, it is the cause of one in a million deaths. One hundred years ago, the Webbs have told us, nearly every person was either recovering from or sickening for enteric fever; now it causes less than six in a million deaths. The other infectious diseases and such diseases as tuberculosis have been reduced to proportions, which would have been regarded a century ago as almost Utopian. These are facts which can be proved by statistics. We cannot prove in that way the enormous increase in the comfort and convenience of the people. Nor can we prove in the same way that without the development of educational and related services modern commerce and industry would be impossible. Yet a moment's reflection shows that it must be so. The enormous developments in the technique of industry and of business administration have been possible only because we are not merely a healthy but also a literate people. Indeed, our whole democratic system rests upon an educated electorate." A small state like Yugoslavia has achieved a splendid record during recent years in the domain of preventive and remedial medical relief to the population, and Soviet Russia's efforts in such directions are, perhaps, unequalled by any other country in the world. What others have been able to accomplish, we should also be able to do.

It is imperative that the wealth of the country should be adequately increased by proper measures of industrial and agricultural development. This is needed not only with a view to removing the conditions of abject poverty and indescribable misery in which the vast mass of the people of India pass their days, but also for concurring proper measures of national development. In all this it is, of course, the primary duty of Government to take the initiative. But if you realize your responsibility, you will be able to render suitable help either as future citizens, or, as future legislators, or as public servants or leaders of public opinion, or, in other ways. Where the people are imbued with a genuine sense of loyalty for their country, have an adequate concern for the commonweal, and are enthusiastic in their regard for the welfare of the general body of citizens, such a country or such a people can alone be expected to prosper.

It is a most tragic circumstance that while India stands in need of the services of a vast army of devoted and selfless workers, who could bring enlightenment to the ignorant and the illiterate, afford relief to the poor and the destitute, ally the suffering of the sick and the infirm, and develop in a proper manner the agricultural, industrial, mineral and other resources of the country, yet, at the present time, the examples of uneducated young men are running to waste as in the absence of proper opportunities they are unable to earn a living and become social outcasts. If the urgency and gravity of the situation were realized, neither the Government, nor the community would allow things to run any longer. These problems are most manifest in the case of the...

Elsewhere also similar conditions have existed, and in some of the countries, comprehensive action has been taken by the Governments concerned to tackle the problem. The time has come when the Government in this country should also definitely recognise its obligation in this matter. Youths of India, if you are earnest and enterprising, you can play your part in the solution of this difficult problem. Inspired by a high ideal and by the spirit of devotion and service to the motherland, you can render material help, on the one hand, in the removal of the deficiencies and drawbacks that stand in the way of India's advance, and on the other, in securing the conditions of progress.

Before I bring my address to a close, I desire to refer very briefly to another matter of vital importance, namely, the need of effective measures for the protection of the people of India against foreign aggression. The sanguinary conflict that is raging since sometime past between different nations has brought home to all thoughtful Indians the utter helplessness of her people against any future foreign offensive. For over half a century Indian public men have urged that proper steps be adopted for opening recruitment to the Army to all classes and sections of the population, in place of the present system, which favours certain classes and provinces against others, and that adequate opportunities be given for the appointment of educated Indians in the higher ranks of the Army in sufficiently large numbers in order that India may gradually become self-dependent in the sphere of defence. This just demand has so far met with a very meagre response. No time should now be lost in bringing into being a modern and efficient force manned by Indians, without any distinction of class, creed, or province, in order that the people of the country may be enabled to defend themselves effectively against foreign attack. Dr. B. B. Moonje of Nagpur, is entitled to our gratitude for his ceaseless efforts for the establishment of the Rhonela Military Academy at Nasik, the first of its kind started for military training, under non-official auspices. It is desirable that Military Training should be organized in all the University centres, as has been done in Calcutta, so that educated youngmen could be trained and would be prepared to protect their motherland in case of need. The accounts we have in old Bengali literature show that Bengal was till the eighteenth century full of 'Telenga Soldiers,' who were held very formidable in war. It should not be difficult for you to revive your old martial instincts under proper conditions. No autonomy or self-government can be real so long as the people concerned are not able to defend their country and their liberty against hostile assault and encroachment.

## The Mysore University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Sir Nripendra Nath Sirkar* at the Convocation of the University of Mysore held on the 25th. October 1929 :—

I am grateful to the authorities of the University and to my esteemed friend, *Sir Mirza Ismail*, for this opportunity of meeting and talking to you here to-day.

You who are of Mysore, are fortunate in having a constitutional Ruler, who is loved and venerated, and who has devoted himself heart and soul for the amelioration of the condition of his people.

You are equally fortunate in having at the head of your efficient and sympathetic administration *Sir Mirza Ismail* whom I have the honour of knowing since I came into touch with him in the days of the Round Table Conference and Proceedings of the Joint Select Committee.

It is not possible for me to avoid reference to the life and death struggle which is now going on in Europe. Different parts of the world and their affairs are now so inter-connected, and our Country is so linked up with Great Britain, that if civilisation crumbles in Europe under assaults from brute force, we cannot but have far-reaching repercussions in this Country.

This is not an occasion on which I can appropriately enter the Political field, but I cannot help saying only two sentences about the present situation.

The popular and fashionable slogan now-a-days is "Down with Imperialism"—but those who from their sojourn in the glady heights of civilisation have not tread on terra firma, can fail to realise that as we are situated, it is a matter for thankfulness that we are part of a powerful empire.

Coming to the Convocation—every year over a dozen convocation addresses

are delivered in these days and youngmen are presented with advice in copious and possibly overwhelming quantity.

I cannot hope to be able to tell you anything which will be novel, unique, or remarkable—but at the outset of your career, after the termination of your academic life, you cannot help realising that you are about to enter a cold, hard and unsympathetic world, where in every sphere of activity, professional or otherwise, there is overcrowding to a distressing degree at a time when the pressure on the land is more than it can bear.

It may be a platitude but it will bear repetition, if I say that none of you can hope for any success in life unless you can eschew the folly of doing less than or only up to what is just required and no more.

I have no special knowledge of Mysore, but I believe students in Mysore, as elsewhere, provide a ready market for political exploitation.

I shall be the last person to suggest that students should be ignorant of political currents of thought or of political events. But I do believe that while keeping in touch with them, in academic days the sense of proportion has to be preserved, and any active part in politics likely to interfere with legitimate activities and studies, should be discarded with a firm hand.

It is however one of the hopeful signs of the day that students are more and more taking part in social activities, and in this sphere every one of us can make his contribution in his way.

Many if not all of you who are about to leave the peaceful atmosphere of academic life for keen and acute struggle, must have, I am sure, put to yourself the inevitable and obvious question, "What am I going to do?" Where competition is keen and ruthless methods are to be expected from rivals, are there no maxims which should be our guiding principle in deciding the question of "What am I going to do" and "How am I going to behave"?

I may be repeating an often-told platitude, but I do believe that in the present day, nothing is so important as to remember that whatever your sphere of life, whatever duties may be your lot to discharge, work should be done with whole-hearted zeal and devotion, even if that work appears to be drudgery incapable of lending itself to any enthusiasm.

I mean no disrespect for our own people, but one cannot help observing that while we are attracted by spectacular work, we have little enthusiasm for the hard and silent work, the inevitable and protected drudgery, which is the very foundation of all beneficial constructive work. Talking of the part of India I know well, I can say that, while it is quite easy to get up a crowd of few thousands for a political procession or demonstration, it is very difficult to get up a band of fifty for toiling in an unobtrusive way, away from the eye of the public.

I would like to make use of the present opportunity for telling you that in whatever sphere you may be placed in the rapidly deteriorating situation in our country in connection with communal and political dimensions, it is your duty to pause and realise what will be our end, if we go down hill as we are doing along the path of intolerance.

It is an irony of fate that intolerance is running wild in a country which had been remarkable for centuries for its spirit of tolerance.

Innumerable sects and beliefs have flourished in India, often with mutually antagonistic ideas and beliefs, but yet their followers have been good citizens and happy neighbours, so very different from the present times when every community seems to be at the throat of others.

Intolerance of today, though often professed on religious grounds, has its origin in the race for power, in the matter of securing jobs or advantages under the new constitution. I firmly believe that a person whether he is a Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or a Christian should not give up the anchorage of his own culture and religion; and I take my hat off equally to the Muslim or the Hindu or the Christian who is sincere in his belief.

Each one of you, however humble, and insignificant you may be, can contribute your mite in purifying the vicious atmosphere of bigotry and animosity. Sincerity and with firm conviction in your own faith, you must be able to respect the faith of others. Being myself an old man, lacking in what is now called the dynamic energy of youth and the "revolutionary urge," I believe that in society progress to be lasting should be wide-based and gradual. We have many ills to get rid of, but the Muslim "burn, loot and loot" should well be remembered.

I believe that today, at least in that part of India with which I am familiar,

indifference to our religion runs supreme in the home and this has resulted in instilling in the youth of India, an atmosphere which cannot be beneficial to the country. In saying thus, I do not include the generality of our women to whom this remark does not apply.

I have wondered though this is a matter on which I speak with diffidence, whether it is not possible in educational institutions, to give instructions on broad principles of morality and religion, as every thinker will admit that there are certain large factors which are common to all systems. So long however as there is unreasoning suspicion in communities that their religion and culture are in danger from others, such a suggestion will be impracticable.

Students of today, who think that they have not all that they desire, may be interested to know the position, say forty years ago, when I had been passing through my academic days.

We had no unions, no common rooms, very little attention to physical culture, and none of other facilities which are common features of University life today. We were not in touch with any of the professors under whom we were studying, and most of them even barely knew our names. Without dilating on this matter, I think I am right in saying that there has been improvement in every direction, and you young men today, are better off in many ways than those who preceded you, and your own University of Mysore has not been behind any other, in attending to the improvement of your academic life.

It is a pity that you are not being addressed today by any profound scholar or a renowned scientist, but one who has been merely a Lawyer and whose only claim to talk to you lies in his great interest in all affairs connected with students.

I can realise my own shortcomings, manifold as they are; but I feel convinced that while each one of you must struggle hard for what is called success in life, yet you cannot condemn too much undesirable methods of obtaining that end.

Success and prosperity are no doubt the ideal of all, but even in this cynical world, success by undesirable methods do not obtain recognition commensurate with its degree and extent, and the moral background however over-shadowed at times, is always present.

Those of you who have passed through this university and are fully aware of the arge advance made as also of the remarkable progress in the State of Mysore, need not be reminded of facts which are well known and, I am sure, well appreciated by you.

That the State has tried sincerely to give increasing benefits to ever-increasing number of students is a conclusion which I have formed from reading your reports on Education, and other literature which had been so kindly forwarded to me.

You have to thank the State and your Ruler and be grateful to them for all that is being done to you. No institution in this world is perfect, but what does matter and evoke admiration is the constant effort towards progressive improvement.

There is nothing in any British Indian Province which enables it to say that they are in advance of your State and that should be a consolation and a source of pride to all of you who belong to Mysore.

To those of you who have attained scholastic success, to them I offer my sincere congratulations. I equally offer to you my best wishes for further success in future. And I conclude by hoping that imbued with trust in God, reverence for learning, wisdom and age, with unselfishness and capacity for hard work, you will be able to serve India and Mysore with loyalty and patriotism and I would like to conclude by quoting from what was said in a previous Convocation address here, namely, "Never forget that it is the duty of every one of you to think and act in the conviction that the honour of Mysore and India is your personal honour."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I conclude by wishing long and happy life to your Ruler, and Prosperity to the State of Mysore in which you live and carry on your activities, academic or otherwise.

## The Travancore University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Esq. Col. G. P. Murphy, Resident, Madras States* at the first annual Convocation of the Travancore University held at Trivandrum on the 11th. November 1909 :—

You have chosen a happy day for this First Convocation of the University of Travancore, coinciding, it does with the Birthday Celebrations of His Highness

the Maharaja, and I regard it as a compliment to have been asked to come here and say a few words.

Travancore has been endowed by nature with a wealth of resources. Its lands are fertile, suitable for widely diverse forms of agricultural development; its forests are extensive and valuable; the full possibilities of its mineral deposits are perhaps not yet realized; it is felt that more can be done with the fishing industry than at present.

Travancore is served internally by an excellent system of roads and backwaters. It has its own ports, and access to the railway. Not the least of its advantages, from the point of view of future development, is the Hydro-electric scheme which will provide cheap power and electricity.

Those of you who have been born and have spent your lives here in Travancore, may be inclined to take these advantages entirely for granted, and may even be asking yourselves at the moment why I should be calling to your attention such well-known facts. But to me, after only a few months' residence, the resources and future prospects of Travancore seem noteworthy.

During my service in other parts of India I have had to deal with States faced with problems non-existent here in Travancore; States whose prosperity depended entirely on agriculture, but where the rainfall was scanty, and irrigation schemes impossible; States consisting mainly of dense forest tracts, but so far from the Railway that the timber could not be exported profitably; States with valuable mineral deposits, which were being exploited by outsiders with little benefit to the local inhabitants; States with natural resources, without finances to develop them; and what is more ironical—States with sufficient finances, but no natural resources to develop.

Travancore, however, possesses a problem of its own—an enormous and ever increasing population which is already above the average of other parts of India in educational qualifications. It is the combination of this highly educated population, with the great opportunities of further development of State resources which, I understand, underlies the inauguration of the University of Travancore.

To you students who are to-day receiving degrees I would say—above all—do not consider your degrees as ends in themselves. A degree, to your prospective employers, means merely that you have reached a certain standard in certain subjects and if you regard it yourselves as merely the first step in your careers, you will avoid many disappointments. Your future will depend on your own initiative, on the interest you take in increasing your own special subject, on your ability to correlate your knowledge with the demands of everyday life.

The intensely practical side of scientific research has been demonstrated with amazing results in recent years. The production of substitute materials in Germany has been carried to an extreme that few people would care to imitate willingly; but it proves beyond a doubt that with the aid of science, you can convert an unwanted surplus, or material hitherto considered useless, into products necessary to the life of the community.

As conditions vary according to localities, the possibilities of such an idea are endless. The Japanese, in their search for new food-stuffs, have treated various roots, plants, grasses, even seaweed, never before considered edible, in such a way as to provide nutritious food for their hungry millions. A chemical expert in America, pondering the problem of surplus of groundnuts, found literally dozens of commercially profitable uses to which it could be converted, including such unexpected products as varnish, paint, and plastic wood. Nor need you say to yourselves that undoubtedly these practical applications of scientific theory were made by men of great experience, with years of research behind them for the principles involved in the manufacture of the electrolux refrigerator were worked out by two Swedish students while they were still at the University in Stockholm.

There would seem, at the present time, to be great opportunities for specialists in some practical, or technical, line, but you will not have derived the maximum benefit from whatever course of study you may have followed in this University, if you have not trained your minds to think logically and independently. Clear thinking is particularly necessary in this troubled world, where whole nations are being led astray by catchwords, slogans, and lying propaganda. The University and its teachers have a right to stand rather than help the confusion which comes over it if you stand with uncertainty and listen long enough to realize that there are no sides to every important question, you should be able to draw your own conclusions.

conclusions that will be completely satisfactory to you, since you have worked them out yourselves.

You have no weapons to combat this modern propaganda except the clarity and power of your thought process and a balanced emotional outlook. Let nothing else divert you from using your mind, however painful and prosaic its use at times may seem.

And now, to those of you who are about to start your careers as the first graduates of the University of Travancore, I offer my hearty congratulations, with good wishes for a successful future. It is an unsettled, exciting world into which you are venturing, but for that very reason, your opportunities may be unique.

## The Allahabad University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Professor *Amarwarh Jha*, Vice-Chancellor, at the annual Convocation of the Allahabad University held on the 25th. November 1939 :—

I have just admitted you to your degree and charged you to be worthy of the same. In wishing you prosperity and success, renown and career of honourable service, I shall employ the words which the ancient preceptors of the land used in bidding farewell to their pupils: Speak the truth. Do your duty. Do not neglect either your spiritual or your material welfare. Imitate our good deeds alone. Help others. Be courteous. When in doubt about your line of conduct, think of some good and noble person, and ask what sense of duty, what kindness, what independence of public opinion, he would show in like circumstance. This is the exhortation, this the advice.

Most of you who are not persons of independent means are doubtless worried over the momentous question of the choice of your career. I trust that before you finally and irrevocably make your choice you will have many searchings of your heart and will look around and finally decide to do what your manhood bids you do. It may be, not all of you will succeed in life. It may be, some of you will falter and fail. But it should be possible for each of you to feel that you have done your best, that you have put forth all the energy and enterprise, all the goodness that you possess. You can do no better than your best. If at the end of it all success does not come to you, you have abundant recompense in the thought that you honestly tried. What will stand you in good stead, always but especially in hours of trial, is the determination that you will not say or do anything unworthy, that you will not abandon the ultimate goal for the sake of a moment's triumph, and that in all your endeavours you will work for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

One word of advice I would venture to give to you, and that is that in all matters, whether great or small, you should try to understand as many points of view as possible; to put yourself in another man's place; to realise that the world is many-sided and truth has many phases; to possess your own souls so that it may be said of you that your life is marked by serenity and calmness that can withstand the pressure of a passing gale. Know your self. Look within and act. Do not be swayed and overwhelmed merely by what others say. Rely upon your self. The still, small voice within you will be a surer guide and a more trustworthy beacon-light than the many voices that tend to confuse and bewilder.

It is possible that some of you may decide upon a political career. That is, of course, the obvious choice in any country which is gaining political consciousness. But I do hope you will recognise that that is not the only way in which a young man or a young woman can serve the country, and that others who are engaged in other pursuits are also, according to their lights and in their own spheres, using the talents that they possess, and advancing towards the goal which must be the common goal of all, the progress and betterment and glory of the country.

A few days ago we had here in this hall a cultural conference, and I am glad we had it, for I trust it served to remind you that so far as knowledge and culture are concerned, there are no barriers and no frontiers. Light should be welcomed from whatever direction it comes. A wise man of England said in the sixteenth century: "I take all knowledge to be my province." He was a scientist; a philosopher; a lawyer; a politician; and a man of letters. His range of interests was wide and varied, and his learning encyclopaedic. One of the most important men in human history, Michel Anania, obtained sentences as writer, scholar, poet, musician—

indeed, there was hardly a form of self-expression in which he did not excel. In our own country we have still in our midst the towering personality of Rabindranath Tagore—poet, dramatist, philosopher, novelist, painter, actor, musician, yes, even politician and teacher. He does not feel that in passing from art to politics, from music to painting he has failed to express himself. It is only the medium that alters. The personality and the message are the same. To those of you that are now leaving the University I give this message, that whatever form your expression takes hereafter, it should be the best expression of which you are capable and it should be an expression of your real personality. According to the excellence and sincerity of your expression and the richness of your personality will be the value of your contribution to the community. Poise; balance; harmony between your inner self and your actions; concord between your life and the world without you; a sense of the liveableness and nobleness of human life; the joy that comes from the consciousness of service; the peace that arises from contemplation: the serenity that no shock can disturb—if you strive to attain these, you will indeed be strong and free and worthy of the "home that lies beyond the stars and the sea."

From the shelter and quiet of these walls you go forth into the interminable wildernesses of the world, with our best wishes for happiness and the true enrichment of your lives. I ask you to think of the University and her trust in you in these words of the poet:—

"Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure,  
knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.  
I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts,  
knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason  
in my mind.  
I shall ever try to drive all evil away from my heart and keep my love in  
flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my  
heart,  
And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is  
thy power which gives me strength to act,"  
And so, Farewell!

## The Patna University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Mr. M. Asirul Haque, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, at the annual Convocation of the University of Patna held on the 25th. November 1939:—

I am grateful to Your Excellency and to the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the University for inviting me to deliver the Convocation Address this year. Conscious as I am of my limitation and shortcomings, I wish your choice had fallen on another, more competent and better qualified than myself. Anyone who has ever passed through the portals of a University is bound to be impressed by the solemnity of a Convocation, and I felt nervous within myself when I was invited to address the Convocation this year; but I accepted your kind invitation as the symbol of your good wishes to the University of Calcutta, of which I have the proud privilege and honour of being the Vice-Chancellor, and which not many years ago was also the *Aims Mater* of the educational institutions now under your jurisdiction and care.

On behalf of the University of Calcutta, I offer you our cordial greetings and best wishes for the future. It was not many years ago that Bengal and Bihar were linked together in a common bond of educational and cultural fellowships. Though administrative and political barriers have now separated us and will probably tend to create greater diversities and divergencies in the future, we shall continue to maintain our mutual feelings of amity and brotherhood. Separated though we may be as administrative units, we are united on the wider plane of India, and the inner chords of a Bihari and a Bengalee may still beat in unison to sing in chorus with the poet "*Sare Jahan se Achha, Hindustan Hamara*."

We must have to-day under the shadow of sinister international conflicts, hope and optimism in human hearts have yielded place to suffering and anxiety. All that has been the product of centuries of strivings and efforts by millions of men and women living down their lives and cherished as the priceless heritage of mankind is threatened with destruction under the devastating onslaught of

ruthless barbarism. Once again civilisation is faced with a new phase of human conflict, and behind the booming of the cannon and the hurried flight of the aircraft lies the anxiety of the world to preserve the landmarks of its cultural development and the fabric of its social and economic life. Men are fighting to the last ditch with memories of heroes now no longer in the land of the living, in the interest of generations yet unborn, not only to preserve the structure and framework of their national life but also to save civilisation from a rude setback. To-day it is a war of ideologies—a conflict to decide whether the world is safe only for the mighty and the strong in arms or whether the smaller units can preserve their national existence without being swamped and overwhelmed by the strength of superior physical force. It is yet too early to visualise how the events in future will take shape, but let us hope that once again man will emerge victorious out of the clutches of elemental passions and will foster a spirit of amity and toleration. Let us hope and pray that the time will come soon when the world will once again breathe freely in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill, with kindly feelings to all, within a commonwealth in which the smallest unit will have the right to live in the fullest freedom of its self-expression.

As I read the signs of the times through the events of the present war, I feel that this war is not without its lessons for us in India. If we read the history of Europe through the last few centuries, we immediately notice that the countries of Europe have in recent times developed themselves primarily as national units—each highly organised and efficient but constantly compelled to direct all its energies and efforts to protect itself from the hostility of the neighbouring states. Alliances, *ententes* and axes have been made and broken on mere exigencies of statecraft, and countries even with diametrically opposed ideologies have combined together in the interest of self-preservation against the real or supposed hostile intentions of their neighbours. Religion intended primarily to bring peace on earth has long ceased to unite the discordant elements, and Western civilisation has so far failed to devise any means for cementing the differences and feuds between countries and races or for counteracting the national jealousies and rivalries feverishly sponsored in the past through various ways.

At a time when we are still in the early stage of a new constitutional development, even though temporarily suspended in many places, with plenary powers of executive and legislative authority within the provinces, oftentimes I feel within myself whether we have not to guard ourselves against the operation of similar forces in this country. If that contingency ever arises—and I pray to the Almighty that it may never come—it is bound to corrode the very foundation of our economic and political life. It will bring ruin to our land and shatter the hopes of generations cherished through ages past. The Empire of Ashoka will then be a mere name in geography, the Empire of the Mughals will only be a phantom of history, and the dream of all our heroes will vanish for ever. A certain amount of parochial patriotism must inevitably develop within the provincial barriers and is probably a necessity in the present conditions. I am never impatient of such parochial patriotism, provided there is nothing to weaken our organic national existence.

In reconstructing the provinces of the future—a task which the young men and women of to-day will soon be called upon to take up—we have to ensure the organic unity of India without in any way endangering the autonomy of the provinces, the fullest self-expression for all the communities or the integrity of other fundamental rights. Thus alone will evolve the ideal of a National State for India. India is more a continent than a mere country. Great Britain, France and Italy have each a population less than that of Bengal; the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and Norway have each a population not even equivalent to the population of some of the districts in India; Germany in 1938 had a population approximating the combined populations of the United Provinces and Bihar. What is to-day happening in Europe may in future be possible in this country. We have, therefore, to read the lessons of the history of Europe in the interests of the future of India. The history of India itself bears tragic evidence of the danger of isolated states with no bond of cohesive unity. With a highly developed intellectual and civilised life, India could not withstand the wave of Muslim invasion even though individual states sometimes put up a stout sturdy fight and a heroic resistance. The political structure slowly built up by the Marathas was shattered in pieces when the rising ambitions of provincial powers could not be curbed. The problem of the future of India is, therefore, how to preserve the



integrity of the economic and political life of India as a whole, in the midst of free development of individual units and full self-expression of all creeds and communities.

Graduates of the University, the duty of solving this problem will soon devolve upon you, and, I am sure, the genius of India which inspired the great Maurya King to send out his missions of peace throughout this vast country and outside, which strengthened the Imperial Mughals in their dream of consolidating India, and which for decades past has been nurtured within the bosom of the poets and the philosophers, the statesmen and the politicians of India, will inspire you in reconstructing the future of this country on the bed-rock of national solidarity. I feel—and feel very strongly—that the only way in which we can assure a great future for ourselves and for this land of ours is to ingrain within ourselves the feeling that we all belong to one great country and to spare no pains to make the young men and women truly and correctly imbibe the spirit of India, and proud of our culture and heritage. No other question is of such paramount importance to-day as this. The problem of unity among the different communities of India is only another aspect of the same picture. The Almighty in His wise dispensation has brought together within the four corners of this country the great cultures of the East and the West. Streams of humanity, ever since the exodus of the Aryas from Central Asia, have come as foreigners and then made this land their own. Waves of various conquests-cum-cultures have come from across the shores and then vitalised the culture of India in the plains of this country. They came in irresistible stream after stream and then lost themselves in the ocean of Indian life. Like the land of Ind rising out of the ocean in some geological past, unmeasurable by any known span of time, there have emerged one great culture and one great people—the culture of India and the people of Hindustan. That culture to-day is neither the gift nor the possession of only one class, clan or section, but is the proud heritage of us all. It was no idle fancy of the architect which preserved with care the ancient Bata Brihka within the city fort of the Mughals at Allahabad. It is not a mere fact in history that the Nawabs and Princes in the South were the trustees of temples and pagodas until not many years ago. For centuries past the hymns of the Vedas have been chanted side by side with the recital of the Holy Quran on the hill-top at Multan. The blue water of Ana Sagar looks across the holy pilgrimages of Pushkar on one side and Ajmere on the other. That represents the true traditions of the past, and let us only follow in the footprints left by giants of men in history and the mighty minds of the past.

Not far away from this place where we are meeting to-day runs past the Ganges in all the flow of her majesty. Breaking through the mighty Himalayas in a small channel, roaring and rushing through gorges and valleys, she reaches the plains of Hindustan, only to be joined by innumerable rivers, streams and rivulets, and then, united in full strength and vigour flows past cities and hamlets to meet the open sea. In ancient India she typified the sacred river in the sacred land of the Aryavarta. To-day she symbolises the spirit of India. Can anyone divide the waters of the Ganges into the waters of the main stem and the waters of the tributaries? Where can you distinguish between the waters of the Ganges and the waters of the Jumna or the Gogra, the Gandak or the Son? One country, one people, unifying diverse creeds and cultures—that represents the history of India. It is only by an approach to all our problems in such a spirit that we can attain the high destiny which awaits the future of our land.

And here in India we have everything in our midst that goes to make up a strong, united and powerful nation. Words have their limitations; expressions fail me: it requires the imagination and the inspiration of a poet to describe the majesty of the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayan ranges guarding our frontiers and the eternal beauty of the deep blue oceans which wash our shores. In our magnificent rivers flowing past historic cities grown and developed by their banks, in the gloriously green forests scattered all over the country, in the enormous and probably inexhaustible stores of our mineral resources, in the proverbial fertility of our soil which has attracted the wandering eyes of the world, and, above all, in our enormous man-power, we have ample materials for the finest economic and political development of this land.

I have often told myself that it is by keeping the map of India in the background of all our actions, and in a proper perspective of the history of our past, rich in quality and quantity, that we can have the necessary inspiration and

background of the unity among the different peoples inhabiting this country. Let us only have faith in ourselves and our past and trust in Providence to guide ourselves and lead us to our future.

To-day I plead for this new synthesis and outlook, even though I am aware of the many controversies, jarring notes and discords. They are mere passing phases. The sun will again rise up in all the refulgent glory of the day, the occasional cloudbursts and thunders will soon vanish, and the little mists and fogs here and there will soon pass away.

And I have no doubt in my mind that when that day comes, you and your province will have a noble part to play. As I speak before you to-day, I see a vision of the future, while the panorama of the past rises up in cluster before my eyes. Here, within this province, I see Gautama Buddha renouncing the Royal Estate and the wealth of the Palaces, sitting beneath the Bodhi tree in deep meditation searching after eternal bliss; I see Asoka in the height of his majesty sending out his missions of peace and piety, and directing the raising of his edicts and monuments throughout the length and breadth of this wide country; the glories of Magadha, the splendour of Pataliputra, the cultural dissertations of Nalanda and Vikramasila, the discourses of Silabhadra, Mahavira and Parawanath, the powers of the Mauryas, the Guptas and the Pals—all appear before my eyes; I see Megasthenes appearing before the court of Pataliputra and Hsien-Tsang crossing the rugged passes of successive mountain ranges to pay his homage and tribute to the genius of India; I see Sher Shah planning and directing the opening out of roads and the establishment of hospitals and serais from one end of India to the other, cutting out jungles and forests, negotiating hills and rocks, and bridging up streams and rivers; I see Mahdoodut Mulk Sharafuddin giving his learned dissertations on the subtleties of Theology and Philosophy; I see the distinguished Subedars of Bihar extending their princely patronage to arts and letters, trade and industry; I see Mir Kasim valiantly defending the independence of Bengal and Bihar. As these scenes pass before my eyes, I see a vision of this province once again making its mark in the history of India. I see a cultured people, valiant and strong, in plenty and abundance, the masses happy and content, able to read and write, the rise of big cities out of nothing forging furnaces and exploiting the vast mineral resources of this land.

"Ankh jo Kuch Dekhtes Hai

Lub Pa Aa Sakta Neheem,

Mahre Hairat Hun

Ke Duniya Kya Se Kya Ho Jaogee."

And in that picture, I see you, the Graduates of this University, occupying the most pre-eminent positions—leaders of men, moulders of thought, pioneers of prosperous peasantry, and, above all, builders of peace, amity and concord. Graduates of the University, to-day I raise that vision and that ideal before you and I wish you God-speed in your march of life.

## The Lucknow University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by the Hon'ble Sir Shah Mohd. Sulaiman, at the eighteenth annual Convocation of the University of Lucknow held on the 9th December 1939 :—

You have done me a great honour by inviting me to address this Convocation of your young and virile University. I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me to speak to so many young men and women, who all are on the threshold of new careers, and are charged with the duty of proving worthy of the degrees conferred upon them.

In normal, peaceful times I might have referred at some length to your historic town, which is not merely a city of places and parks, but has for a long time been a famous centre of learning and culture, and still preserves in its numerous structures of grandeur and beauty the great progress which its old civilisation had achieved. Even in modern times, when engineering and town of great fame, the fine architectural splendour of Lucknow is the wonder of the day. After the Mughal Kings of Delhi, who were undoubtedly great patrons of art and learning, the Court of Lucknow held about the spark of civilisation and on the decline of the Mughal Empire, patronage of art passed to Lucknow. Lucknow architecture is unique and distinct from that of Delhi, and stands apart in its

design and technique. The civilization of Lucknow developed its own special characteristics of refined tastes in dress and cuisine, speech and manners. Owing to the influx of population from upper India, Delhi could not keep its old polished language unadulterated; but Lucknow has succeeded in preserving its chaste language, famous for the brightness of its style and sweetness of its diction. This is not the time for me to dwell on the beauties of Lucknow Urdu, rich both in prose and poetry, as you know it better than myself. However short may be his stay, a visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the air of refinement that pervades the spoken Urdu of your great city. My object is merely to remind you of the greatness of the culture which you have inherited and which it is your duty to foster.

As it has fallen upon me to deliver this convocation address at a time of War, I cannot help referring to the seriousness of the situation which weighs so heavily upon us all. I am addressing you to-day when the British Empire is engaged in the active prosecution of a major War, fought to avenge the unprovoked aggression on a comparatively poor and isolated country, and to uphold her right to resist the use of force in the settlement of international disputes. Poland, in spite of her brave resistance, has been defeated and conquered; but that has not at all meant the end of the War. The allies have given an unmistakable indication of their firm determination to prosecute the War to a successful conclusion until the rule of force, which has recently threatened the world, is eliminated from international dealings. As a result of the new cult of racial superiority, the rule of the strong over the weak and the new doctrine that might is right, Europe has become involved in a great cataclysm. For sometime past, dark and threatening clouds had been looming large on the European horizon, finally greed and ambition brought about a sudden burst of the fire of bombs and the thunder of guns. We in India are too far away from the scene of brutal conflict to realize the full gravity of the situation. The roar of cannon is far too distant to reach our ears. The destruction and havoc caused by bombardment from land and air and the miseries inflicted by the sinking of passenger ships, contrary to all rules of maritime warfare, are obscured from our vision. But as the War progresses—and it is likely to be a prolonged ordeal—our duty to forget our differences, muster our resources of man-power and materials, and combine in defence of our country against all possible aggression will become clearer to us. The British Empire possesses a huge population of more than one-fourth of the total human race and the tremendous resources of one-fourth of the entire surface of the earth. Its strength would be irresistible if only we could present a united front. We must appreciate the imminence of the common peril, and unhesitatingly do our very best to avert it.

Unfortunately India suffers grievously from a lack of unity. Our country is inhabited by a large number of communities which have lived here for generations, and every one of them is entitled to call this land its own, and yet differences between them appear to be numerous and sharp. It ought to be plain to all of us that it is absolutely impossible to make progress in any direction unless all the communities agree to work together in harmony and for a common cause. During recent years we have had too many of communal squabbles, and the spirit which instigated them cannot be too strongly condemned. Not only are there divergences between the major communities of India, but there have been clashes even among the various sub-groups of each community, too deplorable to mention. This very city of yours has recently been in the vortex of a religious feud, producing considerable ill-feeling and bitterness, which make us hang down our heads in shame. I would strongly appeal to you, my young friends, to set your hearts upon a happy solution of all such petty tangles. I have seen the world much longer than you, and I can say from my personal experience that there is no difference, however great it may appear to be, which cannot be removed by common consent, provided our efforts to find an agreement is sincere. I am sure that even within the smaller range of your own experience you have come across cases where quarrels have been composed amicably owing to an accommodating spirit, while others were considerably magnified by an obstinate resistance to compromise. I hope that in the days that lie ahead you will do all that is in your power to set all communal and sectarian feuds at rest for ever, so that all inter-communal relations may be smoothed and placed on a solid basis of lasting peace and co-operation.

Events in the world are so rapid; and their rapid march should daily

intelligent and educated persons like you to learn in a short time what would otherwise take a life-time to understand. What is wanted badly now-a-days is a spirit of tolerance—a firm resolve to live and let live. I do hope that you will go out into the world much wiser than your predecessors, and more determined to create a better atmosphere than exists at present. Nothing, I am sure, can prove too great or too difficult to be accomplished by a group of enthusiastic youths, full of confidence, energy and enterprise, and bent upon getting the communal question of India solved for ever. May you succeed where others have failed so far. Example in such cases, as in others, is always more effective than precept, and it will contribute effectively towards the success of your efforts, if you make yourselves a perfect embodiment of patriotism, completely casting aside all narrowminded prejudices, which have till now been hampering growth of our national unity. Proclaiming such sentiments from public platform and the press is not enough. They must be translated into practice and imbibed in your very life. If we cherish brotherly feelings towards one another, and are sympathetic, fair and just to others, in spite of our religious differences, our generous and cordial relations will be reciprocated. But for creating national unity through communal harmony, sincerity of intention and honesty of purpose are absolutely essential; and this sincerity should be shown not only in political matters, but also in the affairs of every-day life. Sincerity begets confidence, while even the slightest suspicion of insincerity is bound to vitiate all our good efforts and end in failure. And to inspire such confidence, strict sincerity, both in word and deed, is essential in all mutual dealings. Frank, unequivocal and straightforward conduct in relations between man and man will ensure success. In creating a proper atmosphere of communal harmony and good-will our Universities have a great part to play. Your doors are open to students of all communities, classes, castes and creeds. You ought to associate together on a basis of perfect equality and trustful comradeship. If you, my young friends, with your education and culture, begin to cultivate the habit of mutual trust and co-operation and prove that your conduct is inspired by a real generosity of mind, the future of our country will be fully assured.

Practical politics should not at this stage enter into the programme of your daily lives as you are still being trained for leadership in the various spheres of our national life. While in the University, you should prepare yourselves for the great struggle of life that lies ahead. This is just the period for a peaceful pursuit of your academic studies, with your minds fixed on the main object of acquiring useful knowledge. It would be premature on your part to divert your attention to other activities now, as the time will come soon, when after passing out of the University you shall have to take your fullest share in the active drama of life. And just because you wish to play your part well in the fullness of time, you should at present refrain from active participation in politics in order to devote yourselves to that intensive preparation without which you cannot safely guide the destinies of your country.

Last year at the Agra University Convocation I had an opportunity of referring to the type of primary education most suited to our needs. New experiments in this line are being tried in all countries, including our own, for a sound scheme of basic education is the common concern of all countries. I do not to-day propose to discuss the theoretical aspects of this scheme or to advance arguments for or against it. As I then said, "it will be more just to give it a fair trial and watch the result". It is only after the experiment has been tried sometime that we can be in a position to judge how far its products are really better suited for the duties of life than the products of the older system. I myself have always been a strong advocate of an industrial and practical bias being given to our education, but I have also ventured to sound a note of warning against such a bias being over-emphasised at the cost of real learning. Education, after all, is education, and its principal objects are mental and moral training and the acquisition of useful knowledge.

On this occasion I propose to confine my remarks mainly to the burning question of Adult Education. We can best realise the immensity of this great problem by keeping in mind the unfortunate fact that the percentage of literacy in India as shown by the last census was only 5%. The great bulk of our people do not even know how to read and write, and we have to add thousands more head in hand with ignorance, and all the time that an ignorant mind is heir to elementary primary education cannot by itself solve the problem. With the opening of the

and illiteracy, our progress in education will of necessity be very halting and slow if we ignore the grown-up people and concentrate our attention solely on the education of children. Without a system of education, we shall have to wait for over a generation, perhaps for several generations, before the percentage of literacy can be substantially raised. It will take decades for children to grow up and replace their elders; even then illiteracy will not be completely removed because a large number of young people who have finished their primary school training will always be lapsing back into illiteracy and forgetting all that they have learnt. In order to accelerate our progress, we must remove from our path the obstacles which uneducated parents place in the way of their children. It is only by educating the father and the mother that you can educate the children. But we need not despair of educating the parents, as they possess a maturer mind and are able to learn more quickly than children of tender age. Educated adults are sure to help us in seeing that their children are properly educated.

Adult Education does not mean rudimentary literacy, as mere literacy is not education. Education is a wider word than literacy and includes general knowledge and information as well, also the rudiments of culture and polite manners. Adult literacy is inextricably linked up with the political, social and economic advancement of a country. With the expansion of franchise, approaching adult suffrage, adult literates capable of exercising their right of vote are all the more indispensable to the country. It is also to be hoped that by the spread of adult education much of the suffering of the Indian people due to poverty and ignorance will be greatly mitigated. Nor must we forget the immense work that remains to be done for improving our civic life by concentrating attention on better public health, improved sanitary conditions, better housing, happier family life, the removal of intemperance and the proper utilization of leisure hours. The presence of some three hundred million illiterate souls in the country is not only a serious handicap in our progress, it is political and social disaster.

Efforts to remove illiteracy have been made for a long time, but only during recent years there has been a marked revival of interest in adult educational activities. It is gratifying to find that all the Provincial Governments, including our own, have taken up the question of Adult Education in right earnest. Bihar, under the guidance of its last Minister of Education, Dr. Syed Mahmud, held the honour of being the first Province to start a literacy campaign on a province-wide scale and giving the lead to other Provinces. Mr. Sampurnanand, the ex-Minister of Education, also deserved congratulations of these Provinces for the provincial campaign against adult illiteracy which he launched early this year. The hearty response which this appeal received was very encouraging and augurs well for the future. Adult Education should form an integral part of our plan of national reconstruction. Well-defined schemes of primary education and adult education will go a long way towards solving the problem not only of ignorance and illiteracy but also of unemployment. Sporadic attempts may be laudable, but these cannot produce their full results unless there is a well thought-out plan for carrying on adult education both on an all-India and Provincial basis, and co-ordinating the work of the various adult educational organizations in the country. The need for securing the co-operation of all such bodies and associations in the common attempt to make adult education a dominant concern of the educated people led to the formation of the All-India Adult Education Conference last year. Its second session, held last week in Bihar, has met with a great success. The All-India Adult Education Conference has already given a lead in this matter, and it is to be hoped that our young men and women will endeavour to form Adult Education Societies all over the country and do their utmost to promote the rapid growth of such education. Unless we have a large and united body of enthusiastic workers for establishing adult education centres in every important locality, no big scheme of this kind can ever succeed. On the other hand, if all our graduates and undergraduates were determined to spare some time for helping such organizations, the task will indeed be easy to accomplish.

Grown-up people, who are engaged in their avocations of life, cannot be expected to join a day school. For the progress of adult education, the only available course is the establishment of night schools. As teaching in such schools will be outside the ordinary business and office hours, it will be easy for educated persons to help in the work. But we must remember that the merely intellectual work of reading and writing will not be sufficiently interesting to grown-up people, unless it is accompanied by facilities for learning something during

beneficial to them in their every-day occupations, or of interest to them as men and citizens. It cannot be expected that grown-up men and women after a hard day's work will apply their minds joyfully to the study of the alphabet or the mysterious combination of letters and sounds. But if teachers were to combine with such teaching something of everyday knowledge which may be of use to them in their actual occupations of life, greater enthusiasm for adult education will be forthcoming. In addition to the night classes there should also be holiday courses which educated men and women can conveniently undertake to give.

You, the enlightened *elite* of the young generation, are in a position to initiate a mass literacy movement and to guide other workers in the field. Patriotic young graduates like yourselves can best occupy your spare time in propagating mass adult education at important centres. Even under-graduates can to a large extent help in this great movement. Their vacations, which often are utterly wasted without any advantage to themselves or anyone else, can be suitably employed in carrying on social and educational work in the remote corners of the country where they pass their holidays.

Educational work to be productive of good and permanent effect must be founded on voluntary effort without any desire for pecuniary gain. A fully paid staff for a wide-spread system of adult education cannot be procured, if success is to be assured, educated persons will have to volunteer their services. Students must serve as volunteer workers and organizers of the movement for they are to be the pioneers of tomorrow. Considering the enormous man-power of our country there should really be no dearth of men willing and capable to help in such social work. I have every confidence that if a proper appeal is made to the educated classes, there will be a hearty response and a willing co-operation in such noble work. There is no reason why a sufficiently large number of qualified persons should not be ready to offer their honorary services. What greater reward can self-less educated volunteers expect than the spiritual satisfaction of having rendered a vital service, however small their individual portion, for the uplift of their country-men and country-women? It is a programme that should appeal to all, to the young and to the old, to men as well as women, who all can help according to their means and circumstances. I see in the uplift of the adult mass of India a great possibility for the future of our country. Judging from the way the work has been taken up in all the Provinces, both by officials and non-officials, I think that we should before long, if we are true to the light that is within us, be able to rouse the dumb millions of India to a sense of their dignity and self-respect, enlighten them with the torch of knowledge, infuse into them a spirit of equality and brotherhood, break down all barriers of superstition and evil practice, and help to alleviate unnecessary suffering due to avoidable physical diseases. The way for a greater degree of social and economic welfare of the Indian people will thus be prepared.

Instead of discussing the policy and objectives of secondary and university education, I would rather like to utilise the time at my disposal in making a personal appeal to you, young men and women, who have received your degrees and diplomas today and are about to enter upon your life careers. Your position, my young friends, is vastly different from those who took their degrees and diplomas a generation earlier. While still receiving your education you must have been alive to the great need of a wide expansion of adult education, and you must be aware of the various stages through which this new campaign has passed and of the implications which are envisaged by it. I hope that you are imbued with the spirit of the new order of things and that, while entering upon your lives' pursuits you would do your very best to help in advancing it. As educated citizens it is your duty to further the cause of education in our country, and to help all educational workers in their sincere efforts to carry light and learning to the masses. I trust that every one of the graduates and the under-graduates present here would make up his mind to create a healthier educational environment around him and to spread to his utmost capacity the knowledge he possesses so that our national objective may be speedily achieved.

But this alone will not exhaust all your duties and responsibilities towards your fellow-country-men. The growth of political consciousness in India as a result of the introduction of wide constitutional reforms with an adequate measure of provincial autonomy, has very largely increased the range of our duties to the State and the country. Larger measures of reform have clearly been promised. Greater rights and privileges that are to come will inevitably impose corresponding

duties and obligations. There is much that can be done by educated men and women in the political, educational and social spheres, and a very heavy load of responsibility lies on them all. If educated people were determined to help their country-men there are innumerable avenues to which they can direct their efforts. Whatever else you may lack in life, you will never lack a sphere of service to your fellow-men. A very large number of questions vitally affecting our lives as social beings await our attention, and it will be you, my young graduates, who will in the years to come be called upon to solve them.

Due to ignorance and poverty our people possess wasteful habits ; uneconomic social usages are the order of the day. The heavy indebtedness of the working and peasant classes has called forth some measures of relief, but many more measures are needed if their misery is to be even partially allayed. Unless its root causes are removed, economic and social discontent is bound to grow and may lead to dangerous upheaval. We must boldly and with fixity of purpose attack this serious problem of poverty with a missionary's zeal. Young educated persons, with virile blood running in their veins and endowed with vigorous and fertile brains, can, if so disposed, render an everlasting service to their country and their people. They can attend to their poor brethren in unhygienic and insanitary surroundings on the Indian country-side, which are eating away their vitality. They can equally alleviate the sufferings and try to better the possible conditions of life in the crowded dwellings of our labouring classes. By continued work in urban and rural areas we can do a great deal to awaken our people to a sense of better living. The Provincial Governments supported by the Central Government have given a big lead in this direction. But these efforts must be supplemented by the voluntary activities of our educated classes if the general level of our people is to be raised at a quicker pace and a better standard of living produced all round. Here lie fields of activity for your young graduates, where you can do some noble work, no matter in what avocation of life you may be placed hereafter. I am certain that a few hours spent every week in such social or educational work will in no way interfere with your ordinary duties, whether as an employee, a professional man, a trader, a landlord or a worker ; indeed it will add to your prestige and, what is more, give you personal satisfaction of having done your bit of duty in this world.

Whatever your position in society or your avocation of life may be, there will always be numerous lines of pursuit for you to select from : finding work for the unemployed, helping the sick and the needy, rendering social service in times of natural calamities, epidemic visitations, famines, draughts, earthquakes and floods, indeed, misfortunes which for a country like ours are too numerous to mention. These disasters cause wide-spread misery and call for spontaneous voluntary social service. We have in India large crowds gathering at fairs and festivities, which need the tender care and guidance of our educated men. Thousands of people among the poorer classes die every year for want of proper medical aid in their ailments. A very large part of our charity is even wasted on active able-bodied men, while the needy and the deserving are left to starve. Much can be done if charity were directed into proper channels, and individuals in need are helped not directly by donors but through deserving institutions and organizations, which can undertake the unpleasant but necessary task of scrutinizing the claimants before giving them relief. These are only some of the channels of activity into which your energies can flow. With your active mind and body, with your intellectual power and youthful strength, you can undoubtedly render a real and abiding patriotic service, without in the least interfering with your ordinary occupations. It would be nothing short of a moral tragedy if you go through your life earning your livelihood but without any vital consciousness of the moral claims which men has upon man. If you have a will, it will not be difficult for you to find a way. But our efforts will produce their maximum results only if they are co-ordinated. To secure this, organizations of educated young men and women should be formed for allotting duties to separate groups of workers, so that such division of labour may produce the maximum of benefit. Civilization, popularly so called, is the miracle of planned labour and co-ordinated effort.

Of course, such service should be voluntary and honorary, and on a moral plane, quite different from mercenary service for which remuneration is paid. I hope and trust that your aim in education has not been the mere acquisition of gold, though of course the betterment of your pecuniary prospects is a natural and commendable desire. Our young graduates will be rendering a great disservice to their country as well as to the cause of education if their future lives are devoted to

nothing but personal promotion and pecuniary advantages to themselves. Social service can never be measured by material gain. It confers a great spiritual benefit on him who renders it and gives material benefit to those who are helped. Life is more than a mere pursuit of bread and butter; the satisfaction for having been of some use, over and above the ordinary routine work in which one is employed, is the salt of our lives. Let us make it a point to do as much honorary educational and social work as lies in our power, side by side with the duties of our ordinary occupations.

We have to take a broader and far-sighted view; the vital problems of life in this country call for a national solution in which individual gains and losses alone do not signify much. The great problem of Indian poverty, for instance, cannot be solved by adding a few more wealthy people to the community; the root causes, which go to encourage wasteful habits and un-economic living while the available sources of income are neglected, have to be removed. Accumulation of wealth very often means only a change of hands. Frequently a man grows rich by merely transferring wealth from other hands into his own. Accumulation of individual capital, not seldom, entails a transfer of money from the many to the few. On the other hand, there are productive means of livelihood which add to the nation's wealth. You will add very greatly to the richness of our country if you can teach the peasant to produce two blades of corn where he produces one only, and this you may well be able to do side by side with the process of enriching yourself by productive enterprises beneficial to your family and your country. Young graduates! You have learnt a number of subjects at this University and you owe it to your alma mater not to fail to turn all this knowledge to practical use in your future careers. Let not all the time and energy that you have spent in acquiring knowledge go waste, let not all your learning be lost to you and forgotten after you have passed out of this University. Turn these into practical use, so as to serve the educational, social and economic needs of your country.

You are entering into a new world, my young friends, which is vastly different from that in which you started your education. Life is becoming very varied and extensive, and the struggle for existence much more stern and arduous now than it was a generation ago. No doubt there are many more openings and a vaster range of opportunities today than there were ever before, but the number of qualified men in the field has also increased enormously, so that unemployment continues to be as acute as before. The supply of educated and qualified persons exceeds the demand by far. The test of ability in all avenues is therefore stiffer and more difficult. Nevertheless, these facts should not dishearten you because there will always be a place for persons possessing energy, tact and enterprise; and I can assure you that these valuable and great qualities are more in demand today than they were in the days when services were secured by influential recommendations and high-class references.

Academic distinctions will no doubt go a long way towards obtaining for you suitable employments in the various walks of life. They are ready passports for men who have had distinguished university careers. But let not those who have not been able to secure a first-class at their examinations in the least lose heart. Examination, it is often said, is no test of merit, it is certainly not the exclusive test. The vast majority of men who in their future careers have risen to high positions were not necessarily men with distinguished university records. The reason is obvious. The modern system of examination, although perhaps the best in the circumstances, is unfortunately more a test of memory than intelligence, and so long as the method is not changed and access to books allowed, it must ever remain so. As a consequence, students possessing more tenacious memories, who can cram up their subjects well, succeed in doing better than some who may be really superior to them in intelligence. But after the initial advantage gained by the brilliant success at the examinations, this superiority wears off, and as years pass on, the man with greater intelligence, tact and ability is easily able to surpass his more distinguished competitors. The mere fact that some of you have obtained a third-class in your examinations should not dishearten you as that is an obstacle to your being efficient professionals or successful business-men. By your merit and hard work you can certainly live and prosper in the world. Honesty, character and determination will win for you high places for which you can confidently aspire. Talents and qualities like these will win for you desired success. If you possess the necessary perseverance as well as firmness, a steady and progressive career lies ahead of you. No matter in whatever sphere of life you may be placed, your University expects of you to behave honestly, so that it may justly feel proud of you.



# The Muslim University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *H. H. Nawab Hamid-ullah Khan Bahadur*, Ruler of Bhopal at the annual Convocation of the Muslim University held at Aligarh on the 16th. December 1939 :—

I thank you for your kindness in inviting me to deliver the Convocation Address at the Aligarh University this year. I consider it a great privilege to be included in the list of those eminent scholars, educationists, and administrators who have on similar occasions addressed you in previous years. Your invitation has also given me great pleasure, as it has afforded me an opportunity of establishing contact with the present generation of students at my old alma mater, and recalling the pleasant memories of my own student life.

The Muslim University has grown immensely in size and importance since the evolution of the M. A. O. College into a self-sufficient and self-governing centre of learning. There has been a great increase in the numbers of its students and a proportionate extension to its buildings to provide accommodation for the instruction of this larger population. It has also started the teaching of many new subjects, and provided a larger choice of alternative courses of study by grouping the subjects in many new combinations. This is an achievement of which all the well-wishers of the University should be proud, but in our satisfaction at the progress and expansion of the University we must not overlook the importance of preserving the old atmosphere and traditions of its corporate life. One of the great features of this seat of learning has been its cosmopolitanism and the absence of all barriers of birth, class or fortune, making it possible for the students and professors to live and rub shoulders with one another as members of a fraternity, united by the freemasonry of true comradeship and the pursuit of common ideals. The development of this *esprit de corps* in the University is, I believe, mainly due to the great stress laid, since the time of its founder, on the active participation of the boys in out-door games and sports as an integral part of university life. These sporting activities have not only kept the students physically fit and mentally alert, but have also given them a training in discipline and organised combination. It has also taught them the value of fair-play, tolerance of opposition, coolness in times of excitement, and self-control in victory and defeat, which are assets of incalculable value in every sphere of life. The remarks that "the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton" may or may not be true, but it shows the formative influence of sports on the character and personality of man.

Now, as I enjoy the privilege of being an alumnus of this University, and am speaking to you as one of yourselves, I shall take the liberty of telling you quite freely what I think and feel about the present condition of University sports. I would not have been so outspoken in my remarks if I had been an outsider, and I am confident that, even if you do not agree with me, my plain speaking will not be misjudged or misunderstood. In spite of the recent success against the Punjab University, on which I congratulate the University Cricket XI, it is a matter of some disappointment, and even regret to me, to notice a lack of interest in an appreciable degree both on the part of the staff and the students in the physical development and training of the body. There was a time, not long ago, when Aligarh was the nursery of sportsmen and athletes, and its cricket and hockey teams represented the highest standard of sportsmanship, and supplied players for international sides. The contrast between the past achievements of the university in this line and the absence of sporting talent representing international standards in the present generation of students is bound to be depressing to any lover of sports, and the authorities of the university would, I hope, be able to do something for raising the standard of its sporting life.

I shall now say one word about the University Training Corps which was inspected by me this morning. I was very much impressed by their splendid turnout and their martial bearing and congratulate all who may have taken interest in this corps on their success. The advantages of preliminary military training at the University are great and many, as it is a very powerful factor in building the physical and mental stamina of the students, and developing their power of disciplined organisation. This training can also be of great value to them if they want to adopt a military career in life. Its acquirement is particularly necessary in these days when the political equilibrium of the world is so unstable, and the need of India may, at any moment, be called upon to undertake national defence.

The University authorities would, therefore, I hope, agree with me that it would be of immense benefit to the University to popularise the U. T. C., and raise its position to the level of its prototypes at Oxford and Cambridge.

Besides the great encouragement given to sporting activities at Aligarh there has been another distinctive feature of our residential life which also dates back to the time of the far-sighted founder of the old M. A. O. College. He was a scholar of the old school, and established at Aligarh the same joint family relations between teachers and pupils as existed in the maktabas and madrassahs of his time. As a result of this personal contact between the members of the staff and the students, on the playing fields, as well as in the class-rooms, debating clubs, and social gatherings, the professors became the guides, philosophers and friends of the boys, furnished living examples of good manners and proper etiquette, and quickened their interest in their prescribed studies by supplementing them with interesting and valuable information which widened their mental horizon and gave a cultural background to all their activities in life. It is for these reasons that the impress of Aligarh education has been regarded as a hall-mark of efficiency and good breeding in a young man, and we must take the greatest care that these distinctive features of our University life are not only retained, but progressively improved upon. It will be very regrettable indeed if this great institution degenerates into a factory for the mass production of standardised graduates, and its residential hostels sink to the level of ordinary commercial establishments for the provision of board and lodging for paying guests.

The qualities of head and heart which I have described are, so to say, the sinews of war for the battle of life; but the most important of them are the habit of discipline and the power of organisation. They are much more necessary today than ever before, as we are living in an age of cooperative effort, and cannot get the best out of life if we plough our lonely furrow, and do not work collectively for the attainment of a common end. This combined action requires great organising capacity, both in the conception and execution of all cooperative schemes, as it is no easy task to harmonise the natural differences of a large body of people, and make the whole group work as one man. The success of a cooperative undertaking is also dependent on the maintenance of discipline among all the workers. The persons who are set in authority over others should be able to exercise proper control; and their subordinates should be willing to carry out without demur the instructions which they receive. This discipline is included in organisation, as it represents a combination of fair-play and self-control, and the development of these qualities is only a part of the organisation of mental powers. Besides this, if the personnel of a cooperative undertaking is judiciously recruited, and the duties and responsibilities of all the workers are carefully coordinated and organised on a fair and equitable basis, there will be little risk of any breach of discipline or disregard of instructions by the workers.

I shall now take some instances from different departments of human activity to show the paramount importance of organisation in corporate life.

The material prosperity of Western Europe and America is due to the growth of their industrial enterprise, and the secret of this expansion is their highly developed power of industrial organisation. We are also trying to develop our industries in order to make India self-contained and independent of foreign manufactures, as this is considered to be the most efficacious remedy for our economic ills, an insurance against un-employment in our rising generation, and a safeguard against the probable decline in the average income of each individual caused by a rapid increase in India's population. We have many natural advantages in our favour, but we still lack the highly specialised training required for organising industrial concerns on a large scale. We are also lacking in enterprise and a sense of discipline, besides being deficient in organising power. If, therefore, we want to develop our industries in a systematic way, and take our rightful place among the nations of the world, we must acquire a thorough mastery over the technique of industrial organisation.

Organisation is also the key to success in any democratic system of government. No party government can function successfully if its organisation is loose. It is only a well-organised government that can succeed in winning and retaining the support and the loyalty of the mass of the people, and forming a ministry in which the right man is put in the place, and the work of administration is so carefully distributed that the whole government functions smoothly like a well-oiled machine. Another instance of the value of organisation is to be found in the success for

which a University imparts instruction to its students. The ultimate object of this instruction is the organisation of a student's mental resources, or, in other words, the coordinated development of his powers of thinking, feeling, and willing, which are the three great functions of the conscious mind. There is, doubtless, some difference of opinion about the immediate purpose which a University should serve, but there is no divergence of views about the ultimate aim.

There is a school of thought which looks upon University education as a business proposition, and judges the value of its teaching by the commercial standard of pecuniary profit and loss. According to this school the expenses incurred in giving University education to a boy can be justified only if it gives him an aptitude for industrial or commercial production. My own belief is that a University is not a technological institute for the training of young men in arts and crafts, or making them specialists in such technical subjects as may be of immediate use to them in commercial, industrial, or professional life. The function of a University, in my opinion, is only to provide the student with general learning, and to train his mind in the grasp of general principles, so that the tackling of any complicated problem which he may be called upon to solve may present to him no other difficulty than a new application of those general principles which he has assimilated in the course of his University education. According to this view a great advantage of such general education is the building up of a student's character, the enlargement of his mental outlook, and the development of the love of knowledge for its own sake. All the great universities of the world confirm the correctness of this view, and I also believe that it is a degradation of the educational ideal to regard the earning of daily bread as the be-all and end-all of university teaching. These differences of opinion do not, however, alter the basic fact that the main objective of University teaching is, and should be, the organisation of a student's mental faculties so as to enable him to meet any situation that may arise in his life. The most perfect example of organisation is to be found in the vast expanse of the universe around us, in which the heavenly bodies perform their allotted functions under the cosmic scheme separately, but with the inter-play of forces so nicely adjusted that the result of their combination is one harmonious whole. Imagine the consequences of the slightest disorganisation in the forces which keep up the balance of the universe, and you will be able to judge what our society without organisation and discipline would be.

The wonderful mechanism of the human body, which is also a universe in itself, is another perfect instance of organisation in nature, and demonstrates a marvellous unity of design in a bewildering variety of parts. All these parts are separate, but also inter-dependent, and co-ordinated in such a way that they not only discharge the duties assigned to them individually, but also work jointly to form the human organism which, in view of its perfect workmanship, has been called the image of God.

I have dwelt at some length on the advantages of organisation in ordering the activities of our corporate life. But organisation is only a means to an end, and it can lead to good or bad results according to the nature of the end which it is intended to serve. This is illustrated in the stupendous conflict which is now going on in Western Europe and on the maritime highways of its neighbouring seas. On one side is the organised might of Britain and France, trying to safeguard the liberty of the smaller nations, to free Europe from the menace of aggression, and establish peace and good-will among the nations of the world. On the other side is the regimentation of the man-power and other resources of Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia, which are making a desperate bid for the domination of the European continent by brute force, and crushing any weaker neighbour that thwarts their unbridled lust for power. It is, therefore, but natural that the Mussalmans of India, like their co-religionists in the Near East, extending from the glowing minarets of Istanbul to the glistening domes of Delhi should rally to the support of that organisation which is inspired by the humanitarian ideal of defending the weak against the strong, upholding the cause of justice and right and stabilising the peace and social order of the world.

In conclusion, I may be permitted to say a few words about the participation of students in political life. Many members of my audience may not agree with my views, but I hope that they will receive my observations in the spirit in which they are made.

With the advent of democracy in India our students have come into much closer touch with politics than before. I think it is very desirable that they should

study and discuss political questions, so that they may be equipped, when they leave the University, with the necessary training for political life. This study and discussion is bound to produce different reactions on different minds, and it is, therefore, but natural that they should form different political views. But I am strongly of the opinion that, in student life, this difference in political views should not assume a form which may tend to subvert the discipline of the university, or disturb the even tenor of its academic life. The University is not a political institution, and there is no justification for making it the arena of political strife. The employment in the University of tactical methods used by the protagonists of party warfare is a negation of the very principles on which a University is founded, and militates against the true aims and ideals of student life. It also means an unnecessary waste of time and energy, the embitterment of social relations, and a great loss of studies caused by this break in the continuity of university routine.

Having had my say about matters of a didactic nature, which I am afraid must have taxed your patience, I now, in the performance of my most pleasant duty which has brought me here, offer my sincere congratulations to those members of my audience who have received their degrees this morning. And here I should like to take this opportunity of welcoming to this convocation the young ladies whom I rejoice to see amongst those who received their degrees this morning. I am told that it is the first occasion on which our girls have attended a convocation of the Muslim University, and I am proud of the fact that I should have the privilege of being the first to address them. It is the beginning of a new era in the history of muslim education in the country. I welcome the departure from the antiquated custom of segregating the women of India from university life, and I hope that it will not be very long before our girls will take their proper place side by side with their brothers in all the activities of modern muslim India. It is a momentous occasion for those of you who are now saying good-bye to your University life, and leaving the safe and peaceful harbour of these quadrangles to set sail on the uncharted sea of practical life. You will have no other compass to guide you in your course than your own judgment, trained by the knowledge and experience that you have acquired here, both on the playing fields and in class rooms, as a preparation for this voyage. You will be confronted with many difficulties and obstacles in your way, but most, if not all, of them can be overcome if you meet them with courage, self-reliance and patience. You should not lose heart if success does not attend your efforts, for failure is a great experience and a wonderful incentive to further endeavour, and the consciousness of having tried to achieve something noble, something good, is also an achievement in itself.

I am afraid that the next thing which I am going to tell you may appear to you a platitude, as it is to be found in most of the addresses delivered on the Convocation day. But it cannot be stressed too often, as it is a very valuable piece of advice, and I shall include it in my address even at the risk of tiring your patience. It is that after leaving the University you should not imagine that you have learnt all that was knowable, and that anything which you do not know is not worth knowing. You should act on the principle of 'Live and Learn' and keep your mind open to receive new ideas and impressions from any and every source. There is no person, however ignorant and humble, who cannot teach you something new about his particular line of work. Nor is there any object, however small and insignificant, which cannot reveal to you some new secret of truth and beauty, if you only know how to observe.

May I also ask you to bear in mind that you should not live for yourself alone, but try to improve the lot of your fellow-men, and that devoted and honest service to mankind should be the pole-star of your life. But you should not make this service a stepping-stone to self-aggrandisement and personal gain. You should learn to obey, and try to serve and not to lead, as leadership comes of itself to those who have learnt to serve and obey, and have spent their lives in making sacrifices and enduring hardships for the good of other people.

Lastly, I shall again impress on you the vital importance of organised and disciplined combination as the pre-requisite of success in life. You must learn how to work with others in a spirit of mutual understanding and helpfulness, and merge your personal differences in a combined effort for the attainment of the common goal. May God vouchsafe to you His guidance to direct your footsteps through life, and crown all your undertakings with the fullest measure of success.

# The Osmania University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Dewan Bahadur S. E. Runganadham*, Vice-Chancellor, University of Madras at the annual Convocation of the Osmania University held at Hyderabad in 1939 :—

I am deeply grateful to His Exalted Highness, the Patron of the Osmania University, for the honour he has done me in asking me to deliver the Convocation address to the new graduates of the University. It is my great privilege to convey on this occasion the cordial greetings of the Madras University to the distinguished Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and authorities of the Osmania University. Hyderabad is unique in the field of higher education, in that in addition to its own University, which has now been in existence for over 20 years, it has permitted the continuance of the affiliation of the flourishing Nizam College to the University of Madras. This is evidence of the generous desire on the part of His Exalted Highness's Government to encourage, during this transitional period, both types of education, to meet the varied requirements of the youth of the Dominions.

The Chancellor of your University proposed a bold experiment in higher education when he recommended to His Exalted Highness the establishment of a University in which the medium of instruction should be Urdu, while English was to be retained as a compulsory subject of study. The purpose of this great foundation to quote the notable words of the *firman* issued by His Exalted Highness is that in it "the knowledge and culture of ancient and modern times may be blended so harmoniously as to remove the defects created by the present system of education and full advantage may be taken of all that is best in the ancient and modern systems of physical, intellectual and spiritual culture. In addition to its primary object to diffuse knowledge, it should aim at the moral training of students and give an impetus to research in all scientific subjects. The fundamental principle in the working of the University should be that Urdu should form the medium of higher education, but that a knowledge of English as a language should at the same time be deemed compulsory for all students." These words bring out in clear terms the view of His Exalted Highness that the future progress of India, with its old and highly developed civilisation should be not only by the preservation and development of her indigenous culture but by the blending with it of the science and learning of the West.

It is needless for me to dwell on the great advantages of employing the major languages of the country as the media of instruction in higher education. They would help to make knowledge real to the student, would bridge the gulf between the educated few and the vast illiterate sections of the community and would give a great impetus to the development of modern Indian languages and to the diffusion of knowledge and culture. Unfortunately what has been so successfully attempted in the State of Hyderabad is not easy of achievement in other parts of India. There are almost insuperable difficulties in the way of replacing English immediately by the languages of the country. We have to remember that the language of public administration in many parts of the country is still largely English, that there are in certain cases several major languages spoken in the same area and that many of the Indian languages are yet not quite suited to serve as vehicles of modern thought. However, University authorities are giving their earnest attention to this question and are making every effort to encourage the development of Indian languages. You will be interested to learn that the Universities Conference, which met in Bombay early in March this year, discussed this problem and passed the following resolution :—

"That in the opinion of this Conference the medium of instruction at different stages of education up to and including the Degree course should, as far as circumstances permit, be the mother-tongue of the students.

"But in view of the present condition in India, the medium of instruction in the High Schools should ordinarily be the mother-tongue of the pupil, but where owing to the existence of pupils with different mother-tongues in the same school or for other special reasons it is not possible to do so, the medium of instruction should be English or any other modern Indian language.

"That with a view to attaining this end, the Universities of India are requested to take steps for securing the language of the respective Indian languages.

"That English should be a compulsory subject of study in the High School course.

"That modern Indian Languages and Eastern Classical Languages should be recognised as optional subjects for study in the High School and Intermediate and B. A. courses, and they should, as far as possible, be taught through the medium of the mother-tongue or of any modern Indian language of an allied nature.

"That modern Indian languages may be recognised gradually and as far as possible alternatively with English as media of instruction for the Intermediate and Degree courses excepting for English, and if necessary, for Science subjects.

"That instruction and work in all research institutions should be through the medium of English except in such places where it is already being done through any of the Modern Indian languages for special reasons."

I consider that this resolution marks an important advance in educational thought in India. I have no doubt that the lead given by Hyderabad will be followed by other Universities when conditions are favourable.

One of the most commendable features of recent educational reform in India has been the recognition by the Universities that the extension of the domain of knowledge should be the highest goal of their effort. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance and value of research both in the sphere of humanistic studies and in pure science. It advances our knowledge of the world of nature and of man, and vitalises the studies which give us that knowledge. I am glad that research is encouraged in this University by insistence on the submission of theses for the higher Degrees. Though the establishment of Degrees to reward research is of importance, the first thing needed for the promotion of research is the organisation of proper training for research students. It is a matter of common experience that teaching which consists merely in the handing on of text-book information to students loses vitality and interest. It is therefore necessary not only that the teachers of the University should conduct research on their own lines, but that there should be organised training of students in the methods of research. This means that there should be adequate provision for Libraries and Laboratory equipment for systematic post-graduate work, and leisure for teachers so that they may have time to investigate and make additions to knowledge. It is in this way alone that the Universities can fulfil their high function of advancing knowledge and kindle among their students an enthusiasm for the disinterested pursuit of truth.

The Bureau of Translation of the University is doing magnificent work by translating books from English and other languages covering the whole range of University studies. It is thereby making a valuable contribution to the enrichment of Urdu literature and the wider diffusion of modern knowledge and culture. Apart from the work of the Bureau, it would be an excellent thing if the University could establish a Central Research Institute which would deal scientifically with the literature and history of the past. Hyderabad possesses both State and private libraries containing priceless collections of rare manuscripts and books in Arabic and Persian. The University would be rendering a great service to Oriental learning by undertaking the task of collecting and editing such of those manuscripts as have great historical and literary value. Good work, I know, is being done in regard to Arabic manuscripts, but there seems to be scope for a great extension of research activity in the whole field of Arabic and Persian records.

It is gratifying to find that in this great and progressive State, due attention has been paid to the provision for technical education. The importance of technical and vocational education for the industrial development of the Dominions has been realised and a programme of expansion has been planned. One learns that the programme includes the establishment of post-primary ~~technical~~ schools and vocational high schools and the expansion of the Government Technical College into a Polytechnic Institute. It is also stated that proposals for the establishment of a School of Arts and Crafts and of an Industrial Research Laboratory are under the consideration of His Excellency the Governor. In view of all these developments, I have no doubt that in due course, the system of technical education in the State will be complete by the establishment of one or more branches of technology in the University, which are specially suited to the needs and conditions of the Dominions. A great deal of emphasis has been laid on recent years on the need for the introduction of technological studies in our Universities. In view, however, of the general lack of industrial enterprise in the country and the great cost involved in providing the equipment necessary for technological training, several of the Universities have

refrained from undertaking such studies. Hyderabad, however, seems to possess all the facilities necessary for the establishment of a Faculty of Technology in the University. The Dominions have immense natural resources to be developed, and thanks to the financial genius of the Chancellor of the University, the State has ample revenue available for beneficial projects. I hope that it will be possible at no distant date to make provision in the University for technological studies specially suited to the requirements of the State. May I be permitted, in this connection, to make an appeal to the nobles and wealthy citizens of Hyderabad to assist the University with generous endowments? The University exists to render service of the highest value to the State and it should be a matter of patriotic pride on the part of those citizens who take a genuine interest in education to aid the work of the University by liberal benefactions. Such financial support from private individuals is a regular source of income for most Universities in Western countries. I trust the wealthy citizens of Hyderabad will set an example to the rest of India of private munificence towards the encouragement of University education in the State.

Provision has been made in this University for the residence in hostels of over 400 students of all communities. The social and corporate life of the students in these hostels should give them that training and discipline which would fit them for citizenship and enable them to fulfil worthily their responsibilities to society. They obtain not only in the formal studies of the University, but in the daily contact of their minds in hostels and in debating clubs and in their association for games and athletic exercises a training, largely their self-training, which strengthens and develops their character, and inculcates a spirit of give and take which is the bond of society. Students have to realise that discipline is not opposed to freedom but is complementary to it; that the final aim of all discipline is the development of self-control and that without such self-control and thoughtful self-direction, freedom would degenerate into licence. It is to be regretted that there is abroad a spirit of restlessness and disquietude, of rash and unthinking opposition to authority among young men in India today. I shall not go into the reasons for the prevalence of such a spirit; but I would fain hope that it is only a passing phase. Though the task of the Universities is, in regard to the training of character, made doubly difficult by such a situation, they cannot abandon their duty in this respect. They have to devise every possible means of training the rising generation by intellectual and moral discipline for the great social and political responsibilities which await them. I would at the same time appeal to the students to realise that discipline is more than obedience to a set of rules. It is a way of life. It is the result of a slow process of self-training which enables a man to become an integrated personality able and willing to co-operate with others for the common good. The greatest need of our country today, as every one has regretfully to admit, is the promotion of harmony and good-will between the great Hindu and Muslim communities. May I say that the students of this University belonging as they do largely to these two communities could do a great deal in this direction by their example and influence. They live a common life here under ideal conditions. As students they are free from the controversies and acerbities of public life. They have come together for the pursuit of knowledge and learning, which have no communal or national barriers. They have in addition the advice and guidance of their teachers and wardens. If in these circumstances they do not acquire that sense of a larger fellowship which transcends communal and racial boundaries, learn tolerance and consideration for others and cultivate friendliness and good-will towards one another, then I am afraid that their training and education have not borne fruit. The chief characteristic of a really civilized society is the spontaneous and willing co-operation of its members in all that concerns the well-being of the community, for such co-operation implies self-discipline, a sensitiveness to the feelings and needs of others and a readiness to subordinate personal ends to the common good. While there is much talk of freedom and independence in the country, we stand around us strong sectarian and religious animosities and unbridgeable social cleavages and mutual suspicion and distrust. Is there any hope of a change for the better? I think there is. The hope lies with the youth of our country. It is they who should turn their gaze more towards the future than to the past. It is the tendency to hark back to the past that has been a fruitful source of misunderstanding and jealousy. While we should be grateful for our rich national heritage, we should know its sources derived, and should preserve all that is best in it, but should be free to leave our business to press forward and seek new ways

of living and acting together, consistent with changed conditions, so that a stronger and a more united and prosperous India might arise as a result of our common endeavours. All intolerance, exclusiveness and hatred are utterly detrimental to social and national solidarity and progress. There is here a great work of reconciliation for everyone to do, whatever his position in life may be. And we look particularly to the educated youth of the country with its idealism, its keen sense of enlightened citizenship and its breadth of outlook to undertake this vital task of promoting harmony and good-will among all sections of the community.

Towards the building up of this new India, Hyderabad as an influential centre of Muslim culture has a most effective contribution to make. As a great and enlightened Muslim State, she is peculiarly well-fitted to play a great part in the larger life of the country and to assist in promoting the unity and progress of the nation. Of all Eastern civilisations, Islam has been historically the most closely in touch with Europe. It has shared with Europe the heritage of classical antiquity. On the other hand for more than twelve long centuries Islam has been in contact with Hinduism in India, affecting the thought and life of the people and in its own turn influenced by its environment. Its great doctrine of duty is intended to cover every aspect of human life and its mysticism has developed a lofty conception of Ethics. It is, as some of its greatest modern leaders have pointed out and as is exemplified in the life of the Ruler of the State, a religion of peace, toleration and brotherhood. We look hopefully to the State of Hyderabad, therefore, to play an effective part in reconciling the interests of Hindu and Muslim in India and in promoting the unity and peaceful progress of the country.

Graduates of the year, let me offer you my hearty congratulations on the success you have achieved and wish each one of you a career of great usefulness to yourself and to your country. You will, I hope, by reason of the training and culture you have received at the University, bring to bear on the solution of the difficult problems which will face you a wide outlook and a balanced mind. Do not be carried away by mere catchwords, but exercise your independent judgment and discriminate between what is false and what is true. When appeals are made to your patriotism, you will be able to judge for yourselves whether the sentiment appealed to is of a worthy or an unworthy kind. Patriotism is a great and noble virtue, but it is an emotion which is capable of being exploited for unworthy ends and sordid purposes. You will have to see to it that you interpret your patriotism worthily and direct it along fruitful channels of service to your country.

I am glad that, thanks to the wise and progressive administration of the State, the problem of unemployment is not so serious in the Dominions as in other parts of India. Still, I would say to you that success in life depends to a large extent on yourselves. Be alert, resourceful and self-reliant and do the work that comes to your hand conscientiously and thoroughly. If you are keen and purposeful and adventurous you are bound to win through. Remember that there is vast scope for the patriotic energies of educated young men and women in the spread of knowledge among those who live round about you. Education is a field of service of vital importance for making India fit for a democratic system of Government. Constitutional self-Government cannot become a reality until there grows up a well-informed public opinion among the masses. Let the spread of knowledge in the villages be an object of constant solicitude to you. You have an advantage over the graduates of other Universities in that your education has been in a language which the common man can understand, and you are specially fitted to carry the light of knowledge to those who sit in darkness. You have received an expensive education in this University not for your personal benefit but that through you the large numbers of those whom higher education cannot reach may be benefited and uplifted.

In view of the magnitudes of the work which lies before us, it behoves us to think not so much of our rights as of our duties as citizens. The great task of creating a united and prosperous nation is one which should appeal to your highest patriotism and call forth your best energies. You are aware that the greater part of Europe is plunged today in a ghastly war in order to resist aggression and to preserve freedom for both individuals and nations.

Value therefore the freedom that you have as a priceless possession and use it in the service of the community. And above all carry into life with you the spirit of the University, which is a house of learning and knows no distinction of creed or race or colour and which exists to create the words of an English poet, the late Laurence Binyon—*to build something*



High, and yet more high,  
 The knowledgeable towers above base wars  
 And sinful surges reaching up to lay  
 Dishonouring hands upon your work, and drag  
 From their uprightness your desires to lag  
 Among low places with a common gait,  
 That so Man's mind, not conquer'd by his clay  
 May sit above his fate,  
 Inhabiting the purpose of the stars  
 And trade with his Eternity.

## The Rangoon University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *U. Tin Tut*, M. A., I. O. S. the Chancellor, at the annual Convocation of the Rangoon University held at Rangoon on the 22nd. December 1939 :—

The most important event of 1930 for the University was the enactment of the University Amendment Act and one of the consequences of it is that we have no longer the privilege of having His Excellency the Governor as the head of our institution while the Hon'ble Education Minister, who was necessarily our Pro-Chancellor under the old Act, has elected under the amended Act to nominate a successor. I wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging on behalf of the University the debt that we owe to His Excellency the Governor and the Hon'ble Education Minister for the sympathetic interest which they have taken in the University as its Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor, an interest which we know they will maintain though they will no longer be burdened with the formal duties which fell upon them under the old Act. We have also lost by the changes the services of the Hon'ble Sir Mya Bu as Vice-Chancellor. He is an eminent Burman whom we all respect and the University is indebted to him for wise counsel and unsparring devotion to his duties as Vice-Chancellor during two difficult years of administration, years in which he gave to the service of the University time which he could ill spare. We have also lost by the recent changes the services of many notable persons who were members of the University Council or of the Senate and who rendered valuable services to the University. Death deprived us last August of the valuable collaboration of Mr. H. W. Smith, a member of the University Council and of the Governing Body of the Teachers' Training College.

The changes have however brought new blood into the controlling bodies of the University and I offer a hearty welcome to my colleagues Mr. Sydney Loo-Nee, the new Pro-Chancellor, and Dr. Maung Set, the new Vice-Chancellor. Mr. Loo-Nee is a highly respected political leader and fills an important place in the Legislature of the country. He is a patriotic gentleman who can be relied upon to serve the best interests of the University. Dr. Maung Set requires no introduction to us. He has already shown his merit as Vice-Chancellor in two previous terms of office, combining the arduous duties of the Vice-Chancellorship with the full-time duties of the Municipal Commissionership of Rangoon. He has now retired from the service of Government but has with characteristic public spirit come forward to sacrifice his well-earned leisure to serve another term as Vice-Chancellor of the University. Let me also welcome the newly elected or appointed Councillors and Senators of the University. Almost all of them are persons who have already attained distinction in public life, in the Legislature, in the public services or in the field of education. Their participation in the counsels of the University will be of great advantage to it and their presence on the controlling bodies must still the old criticism that the University was run by an oligarchy.

To my mind, the best features of the amended University Act are the constitution of the University Council on a wide representative basis and the position accorded to the Council as the supreme controlling body in the University itself for both University and College affairs. It seems to me that the orthodox conception, however correct in theory, of a University independent of popular control and even of Government control, does not satisfy the practical needs and natural demands of the country at its present stage of political progress. The existing constitution of Britain accords a large measure of self-government to the people of this country and education is one of the subjects which have been trans-

ferréd to popular control. It cannot be denied that there are many Burmans who feel that the constitution does not go far enough in what it gave over to popular government and the presence of a University virtually independent of control by those who may rightly claim to represent the Burmese public was necessarily a source of irritation and gave rise to the suspicion that the University was intended to be administered contrary to the true interests of the country. Those of us who were privileged to participate in the Government of the University under the old régime know that the suspicion was unfounded but it must I think be admitted that to put it mildly the old constitution of the University was tactless in relation to a Burmese public rapidly growing conscious of its increasing political power. These circumstances occasioned a long standing demand for the revision of the old University Act, a demand which in course of time became irresistible and which resulted in the amended Act. It is now for those of us, to whom the new Act has entrusted powers of control as individuals or as members of University and College Bodies, to show that the University has nothing to hide from the public and that we are determined that the University shall be organized and managed in the best interests of the Burmese people. A University is much more than a teaching institution and it is my aspiration as Chancellor that under its new constitution the University will attain its true position as the centre of culture, intellect, learning and last but not least, patriotism, for the people of this country. There will no doubt come a time not far distant when we win unqualified acceptance as a national institution and can claim without opposition or suspicion to control our own affairs and leave no room for doubt that the University can and will govern itself in the best interests of the country and of the University.

I offer my hearty congratulations to the worthy young graduates on whom degrees have been conferred to-day. I invite the attention of those of them who have not yet entered upon their careers to the University Employment Board which was recently constituted on the general lines approved by the University Council. On behalf of the University, I desire to thank the trustees of the Rangoon University Endowment Fund, the Burma Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for their generous contributions towards the expenses of the Board and to the Companies and Heads of Departments who have promised their co-operation and support to the Employment Board. A degree from a good University is the purest of all distinctions as it is based on knowledge acquired by intelligence and hard work and the fame and good repute of a University lie largely in the hands of those who after graduation enter the various professions and callings, as the general public will rightly judge this University by the standard of knowledge and good behaviour which it finds in our graduates. I exhort you therefore to conduct yourselves suitably unto the position to which, by the degrees conferred on you, you have to-day attained.

Those of you who were brought up on old Burmese legend and folklore will be familiar with the ancient University of Taxila or Takshashila, which has given us the Burmese word for a University. This University flourished many centuries before the first European University, that of Salerno in Italy, came into fame in the ninth century A. D. and the University of Paris was opened in the twelfth century. When young princes, noblemen and gentlemen graduated from this ancient University of Taxila and were about to depart for their homes, which were often many hundreds of miles away through rough roads and almost impenetrable jungle, it was the custom for each graduate to receive from his tutor a final and most important lesson to guide the future of the departing scholar. You will remember that in the case of Maung Hsueh Kyeing, this final admonition from his tutor contained three exhortations, the observance of which led the youth to the throne of Pagan, the most ancient of the old kingdoms of Burma. On this solemn occasion when the University of Rangoon imparts the hallmarks of its various degrees on its new graduates, I wish to add the power and knowledge to give to each of you a formula which could help you in kingdoms and empires. Nevertheless I will give all of you new graduates a gift which if you accept and keep inviolate may not bring you kingdoms and empires but will bring you the respect of others and happiness and good fortune both in this life and in future lives. My gift is the gift of self or morality which I charge you to keep inviolate all your lives. True morality is the foundation of the basis of all sorts of prospects or rules but consists of a high standard of thought, words and action. Whatever profession or calling you may choose to undertake, that both in private life and in the exercise of your calling you will not wrong yourselves

to be influenced by other than worthy motives. Morality is the invisible magic cloak which will guard you against the darts of temptation in any form and by the practice of morality you will assure your happiness and welfare in this life and in the next. By the same means you will be helping to advance Burma on her road to full self-government, as our fitness to govern ourselves will be judged by the world by the manner in which our professions and public institutions are run and there is no better guarantee for the success of any institution, be it a legislature, a judiciary, a university or a society, than purity of motive and action on the part of its members.

A Chancellor's convocation address is directed primarily to the new graduates but I am conscious both of my inadequacy and of the fact that this address will reach a wider audience than the holders of new degrees. I am glad to see in this hall many young people who are still students of the University and I shall venture to offer them some words of advice which may be of use to them in these troubled and eventful days. Let me deal first with the subject of students and politics. It is very often said that students should avoid politics, but contrary to what you may have expected, my advice to the students of this University is that they should take an interest in politics. But I beg of you to distinguish between party politics and national politics. As members of a University we should be above party politics. Let questions such as what party should be in power, who should be the Ministers and whether a particular administrative or legal measure is justified be discussed and decided by those whom the voters of the country have returned to the Legislature or whom they have chosen as their political leaders. But the general welfare and political progress of Burma is the concern of every Burman and as educated and intelligent young men and women it is your duty to watch and exert your influence. In national politics as distinct from party politics, every Burman has a duty and he can have but a single aim and that is that Burma should attain her due place as a fully self-governing nation in the shortest possible time. Your first business as students is to equip yourselves mentally and physically to play a worthy part in the future of Burma when you leave the University and enter your life careers. Do not therefore let politics be a distraction to your studies and do not let it be an obsession but there is every reason why you should take the greatest interest in the progress and welfare of your country and of the great events which take place in the outside world.

I am well aware that from the very time that this University was founded, many past and present students of this University have taken a keen interest in the politics of Burma and that many of you are ardent young nationalists. Love of one's country had a keen interest in her welfare and political progress are good qualities and patriotism at all times and ages has been the subject of high praise and it is very important for the future welfare of Burma that the University should turn out a stream of young men and women not only well educated but also imbued with an ardent love for their country. But nationalism has sometimes been described as a double-edged sword in that though it may damage the enemy, it sometimes injures the wielder also. Nationalism is of course a great force in the modern world, being the cement which binds together an aggregate of individuals into a common love and loyalty for the nation. It has been the making of many countries but on the other hand it has also caused international differences and conflicts. Thus nationalism has been the making of modern Turkey while the same force perverted into an extreme pride of race and aggressiveness in Germany has caused the present war.

It is necessary therefore for the people of Burma when forging their own weapon of nationalism to see that it is of right steel and of the right shape. Let us therefore include in our nationalism pride in our common origin, our common language, our common history and our common heritage from the past. Let us put into our sword of nationalism the bright steel of unity and of determination to pull together and solve a glorious future for our nation. But let us omit from the composition of the sword the corrosives of hatred and unfairness towards other countries and other races. Let us make our nationalism a broad one comprising not only the indigenous races who in spite of different nomenclatures and different languages are geographically and ethnologically true Burmese but also all those who have given us their domicile of origin in other lands and have chosen to settle here in Burma. Let us think of the future of our country and are prepared to think and act as true citizens of Burma. In the long run nothing will be lost and everything will be gained by shaping our nationalism on a broad

pattern and in recognizing the just claims of other races and countries while we fight for the just rights of our own nation. Pride in our past history and confidence in our future are the proper ingredients of our nationalism, not fear and hatred of other peoples, and in our nationalism there should be a proper regard for our duty to the Empire and to the world. The recent fate of many brave but small nations in this world of great political units and mighty armaments shows that our best chance of attaining political freedom and retaining it lies in our remaining within and pulling our weight in the Empire but doing all we can to hasten the day of full self-government and dominion status which as defined by the Statute of Westminster contains all the essential attributes of political freedom. To the world at large we owe the duty of putting the full weight of our nationalism on the side of moral forces in the never-ending fight against brute force and the lust for power.

A nation is an aggregate of individuals cemented together by a common history and traditions and usually by a common form of civil government. The first essential of a good nationalism is therefore unity. In a sermon recorded in the *Mahaparnibbana Sutta*, Buddha shortly before His death named the seven conditions of welfare (*aparhāṇiya dhamma*) for all institutions, be they religious orders, nations, universities or societies. The first condition in His own words was that the members should "meet in concord, rise in concord and carry out their undertakings in concord." The welfare and progress of your family, your club or society, your College or University and your country depends on the unity of its members. The unity required is unity of purpose and action. It is seldom possible to obtain unity of views in any institution but when a decision vests in a leader, it is necessary for the welfare of the institution that once a decision is made by him, all the members should follow it. Where the decision vests in the majority of the members, it is necessary for the progress of the institution that the minority should subordinate its views and unite in purpose and action with the majority. It is only if you practise unity in your club or society and in your classes and hostels that you can extend unity to your College and thence to your University. It is only by the practice of unity in all the lesser institutions in a country that the citizens can hope for unity in the country and a united country is a strong country. Remember also that unity in its turn depends on discipline, which is the only means by which a leader can lead and effective action made possible in any aggregation of individuals. Discipline is largely the product of habit and training and I hope therefore that in your daily life in the Colleges, both in the classroom and in the playing field, you will realize the value and importance of discipline and exert your influence on the side of discipline, remembering that this quality makes the difference between a team and a collection of players and between a well-trained battalion and an armed mob. In the training and discipline provided by this University and its Colleges you will find the means by which you will be able to equip yourselves to be disciplined, united and patriotic citizens of the great and self-governing Burma that is to be. Make the best use of your time here and be thus prepared for the great opportunities which are already open to Burmans and for the wider opportunities in the Dominion Status that is to come. Be proud of our country's great past and be confident of her future which lies so largely in the hands of the coming generations of educated young Burmans. I do not think the Dominion Status can be far off, but remember that political freedom such as that does not come to countries as a gift. We must earn it by discipline, unity and a determination to prove ourselves fit to govern our own country by the highest modern standards of government. Burma will require persons trained in this University to be her Statesmen, her Ambassadors, her Generals, her Prime Ministers and her Governors. It is the result of evil Karma to be born in a subject State and to be able to do nothing for her, but it is the result of good Karma to be born in a subject country in order to be able to play a noble part in her progress to full self-government. I have no doubt that there are many among the present students of this University who are destined to be great national leaders, great statesmen and great administrators, or to win renown in the field of science, art or literature. Our future lies in our own hands. As Britain rose in the course of the centuries that have passed to a greatness which Imperial Rome could not have conceived, so it may be that our own country in the course of the centuries that are to come will rise to a greatness and eminence not conceived of by Britain to-day.

# The Punjab University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by Dr. T. E. Gregory, D. Sc., (Econ), Economic Adviser to the Government of India, at the annual Convocation of the Punjab University held at Lahore on the 21st. December 1939 :—

I feel very deeply the responsibility which you have placed upon me. "These are the times," wrote that representative eighteenth century Englishman, Thomas Paine. "These are the times which try men's souls." Whilst I am speaking here, whilst in every part of this country, men and women can go about their daily business, whilst the old can rest in the shade, and the young can dream and study and nourish their ambitions, the bodies of men, no older, for the most part, than you are yourselves, stand as the living rampart between all those ideas for which a university stands and the dark foes of destruction. Make no mistake and let us like men face the facts. There are thousands of young university men in the armed forces of Great Britain and of France. All that you have lived through, they too have lived through—the comradeship (the most precious of gifts that a university can bestow), the clash of mind with mind, that intoxicating first contact with knowledge and with the thought of all times and ages. All that you hope for, they too have hoped for—the right to live, the right to distinction. Everything that a university stands for: mutual tolerance, comradeship, enlightenment, the development of personality, the chances of place and power, were their inheritance, as they are yours. I cannot speak on an occasion of this kind, in this hour of destiny, without asking you to bear in mind the sons and daughters of the Universities of Great Britain and of France. For they, and they practically alone in Europe now since Scandinavia is now also threatened, are the inheritors of that noble tradition of humanism which is in deadly peril to-day.

I have lived too much with young students, and know only too well how they dislike being talked at, to venture to give you advice, or to propound some solemn theme. Instead, if you will bear with me, I would like to try and analyse those intellectual forces which, in the two periods of time which lie behind me, have impinged upon the mind of a student of the Social Services. This is one man's intellectual story: and I do not pretend that it is in any way unique, nor that it represents the only pattern which the events of 1910 to 1939 could have evolved. But I think it reveals some problems and those problems, if any ordered civilisation survives the present conflict at all, you will have to face, whether you will or not.

The intellectual gods of the days of my youth were H. G. Wells and G. Bernard Shaw. Fashions have changed and I suppose, if I were twenty or thirty years younger, I should reverse the order. Nevertheless, when I entered the London School of Economics in 1910, that was the order in which I ranged them. Like many men of my generation, I had read much of Dickens, a little of Thackeray; as one's French improved, something of Anatole France: "Penguin Island" and the "Gods Are Athirst"—that pregnant premonition by a writer of genius of the unconscious worship of cruelty for its own sake which characterises our age—were, I think, the first two of his books that I read. At the London School itself, the same stream of thought was represented by Leonard Hobhouse, that most tragic of philosophers, since in him the hatred of suffering combined with enormous learning, both on the metaphysical and the sociological fields, together with an intense interest in the application of philosophy to politics, to a view of life in which the harmonious interaction of all social forces constituted the integrating element. "Democracy and Reaction" was the first book of his that I had read: I remember it now more because of its passionate repudiation of the philosophical idealism of Z. H. Green, as applicable to an imperfect world than because of the local and temporary issues with which it dealt. One other book influenced me as all greatly—it was Graham Wallas' "Human Nature in Politics". It was the precursor, as I think we can all recognize now, of the Freudian and "hard-boiled" interpretation of politics, and it is significant that it was written by a man who had been one of the founders of the Fabian Society and whose first great literary success had been the life of Francis Place, the philosophical tailor of the nineteenth century. The associate of the great Radicals of that age, and who, therefore, had to have been the product of the great movement of liberalisation in politics, the significance and importance of which Graham Wallas

had insisted upon. One other intellectual influence I must mention at this stage—I was influenced by a now largely forgotten, but, nevertheless, I still think, a great writer, W. Hale White, generally known as Mark Rutherford—the embodiment of spinozistic learning, of non-conformist idealism, of radical politics, and—to use an Americanism—of reaction to “small-town” middle-class narrowness and nervousness and respectability. Freud, on the one hand, Sinclair Lewis on the other, magnified in the post-War twenties all that Graham Wallas and Hale White had said in the pre-War era. I dare say that if I had been a few years older I would have discovered a literary voice which combined all these things even more effectively, in the person of George Gissing. But I am trying to describe not the literary and philosophical history of an age, but one man's experience. And that man's experience was associated with that of others by the fact that a common tradition lay behind the intellectual experiences of the men I have mentioned. That experience was the humanistic tradition of the nineteenth century.

That humanist tradition expressed itself in the fields of economics and politics, by a series of phenomena the universality of which requires almost an effort of the will to recall. Over the whole range of countries affected by that tradition, there were representative institutions, free speech and freedom of movement. It was possible to move over a large part of Europe without a passport: the U.S.A. was still absorbing round about a million emigrants every year. Economically, the volume of international trade was growing with every decade, and though there were tariffs, their level was, in the light of present levels, ludicrously low. The international movement of goods was sustained by a vast movement of persons and of capital the gold standard kept the price-level of all the nations of the Western World and their Overseas connexions in fair correspondence. It was, in fact, as well as in idea, a largely unified world.

It is true that on the fringes of the countries of the humanist tradition—in the Balkans, Russia and in South America, such settled conditions of human liberty and freedom of enterprise did not obtain. Even within the confines of Western Europe, ugly traces of an opposite way of life were at times revealed—the Dreyfus affair, for instance, which showed the strength of racial feeling in the most cultured peoples of Continental Europe. Sorel and the Syndicalist Movement were another symptom which was neglected: as I have already suggested, Graham Wallas was the precursor, in the sphere of politics, of the sinister view of human nature which was later to be expounded by Freud. But the failure of the generation which was young when the Great War of 1914 broke out to read the storm-signals is significant. Why was not more notice taken of them? Because, as I suggest, that generation was nurtured in a generous tradition and the institutions in which that tradition was embodied worked. If we were blind, as some think we were, it was not because we shut our eyes and tolerated a glaring contradiction between appearance and reality. The pragmatic sanction of William James, as applied to institutions, gave them a certificate of validity. The welfare of the world, in terms of material welfare, and in terms of human happiness, was visibly on the increase. Nothing, in the onward march of events, seemed to contradict the hope that in the course of time the turbulent fringes of the outer world would, not become assimilated to the central tradition. There was no reason why any of us should not subscribe to the closing words of the book in which the as yet undisillusioned H. G. Wells of the opening years of the present century expressed the hope—I think it was in “Mankind in the Making”—that some future generation (I do not quote the exact phrase) would seize this planet “as a sculptor takes his marble and shapes it better than all our dreams.”

The first World War came and shattered these delusions. Let us be clear and see exactly what it was that the 1914-18 War did. To what extent, and in what way, were we deluded? I suggest that the pre-War generation took the strength of its own convictions as a measure of the universality of the ideas which constituted the intellectual side of a compound of beliefs, feelings and faiths. The unsubdued “outer fringe” of which I have just spoken (as I think we can now all see, in the light of the “Shadow War” of 1939-45, and even more in the light of actual hostilities) was not a shrinking margin of acknowledged error, but some vestigial remains of an outcast body of thought and way of life. It was, in fact, the expression of the way of life of peoples and communities alien to the humanist tradition. It is clear, now, that neither the tradition of the humanist movement, nor the influence of the all-embracing Catholic Church, neither the rationalism of Newtonian Science nor the triumphant march of technology, have managed to create innate

and psycho-physiological approaches to the problems of existence. The Hitlerian Third Empire has illuminated these facts for the last seven years : but the blind cannot see and the deaf cannot hear. It has required the actions of the heirs of the tradition of Marx and of Lenin to make these points clear. I will state the inferences in a moment.

I do not pretend that I was immune from the intellectual follies of my generation. Faithful to the tradition which we had inherited, believing with all our hearts that the War of 1914-18 was the "War to end War," we attacked the Treaty of Versailles, worked with all our hearts for a reconciliation with Germany and wasted, as it now seems to me, our emotions, our energy and our money (of which we most of us had very little) for ends which were self-defeating. They may be right who still assert that had a more generous peace been made with Germany, Hitler would never have risen to place and power. I confess I used to share this opinion : I confess also I no longer share it. For, looking back upon the twenty-one years between 1918 and 1939, what is the dismal and disconcerting factor which stands out ? I have tried to explain that before 1914 there was a received tradition, which was adjusted to and embodied in, actual institutions, though there was an "outside fringe" of opposition. But in the last twenty-one years the position has deteriorated inasmuch as the received tradition itself has been unable to maintain its own inner logical consistency even in that area of the world which emerged triumphant from the World War and which was not, therefore, exposed to those psychological forces which, on a short-run interpretation of the post-War situation, forced Germany upon the path which has led to the present war.

I will select two illustrations of this failure of the humanist tradition to maintain itself. The first is the breakdown of the League of Nations : the second the failure to arrive at any positive result of the two International Economic Conferences, one of which preceded, the other of which followed, the great depression of 1929-30. These failures are intimately connected with one another. Let us make all allowance for the proximate causes of failure, the principal element being the fear of the smaller nations, of the consequences to themselves of intervention. But, in the main, the League has broken down, not because, as some of the opponents of the League urge, it did nothing, but because it attempted unsuccessfully to apply sanctions against Italy—it was thereafter that it ceased to command any true allegiance. But what was that lack of success itself due to ? Surely to the unwillingness of the member states to adhere to the principle which is involved in any such concept as a League, a willingness to subordinate national interests, so called, to the wider interests of the world order. International peace is possible only on three pre-suppositions : one is that of a balance of forces so nicely adjusted from time to time that no side will risk a conflict. The present War again illustrates the futility of relying on a balance of forces as an ultimate guarantee of peace. Secondly, it is possible to achieve peace by the emergence of one great power in a position to dominate the rest—of that I shall have a word to say in a moment. Lastly, it is possible to guarantee peace by adherence to a common idea : that no particular issue can transcend the interests of the world order as a whole. In the last resort, that involves the acceptance of a certain philosophy of politics and the failure of the League is due to the unwillingness of the League State to accept this truth. They were willing enough to accept the League, they were not willing to accept the philosophy which alone would have made the League an efficient instrument of peace.

The danger that civilisation would collapse owing to a refusal of statesmen to face the necessity for a thorough-going philosophy in regard to the relation between states goes back to the very beginning of the liberal movement of the nineteenth century. Cobden and Bright were non-interventionists and some of their radical followers were not even prepared to limit national sovereignty to the extent of concluding trade-agreements. What prevented the logical difficulty which the countries of the humanistic tradition now find themselves facing from being earlier realised ? Why was it possible to reconcile nationalism and unlimited sovereignty with the hope of universal peace ? For two reasons : Because in the nineteenth century it was assumed that in freeing nations and making them self-determining they would adopt a policy in international affairs which would be pacific and take account of the rights of others. And why was it expected that they would do this ? Because it was believed that, in spite of unlimited national sovereignty, the economic interpenetration of the world by means of free trade, the free movement of capital and the free movement of human beings, would prevent the

clash of national interests from ever arising. Both these premises were mistaken and that brings me to the economic failures of the last two decades. Here again there are proximate causes. The legitimate desire of the agricultural areas of the world to assist the process of transition towards more balanced conditions is one of them. The pressure of unemployment explains the resort to intensified protectionism in the industrial states. But just as in the sphere of political thought, there are deeper lying causes. I have already explained that self-determination in politics is not identical with a liberal view of international politics: I am afraid that the economic expression of the anti-international point of view in economics is the doctrine of self-sufficiency in its cruder manifestations. It is because people have already preferred, in their heart of hearts, guns to butter that they urge sacrifices of social welfare in the name of sufficiency. But it is a doctrine which is the negation of economic liberalism, which sees in the interchange of the products of different areas, one of the indispensable means of reducing the inequalities in the satisfaction of human needs which might otherwise persist for ever. In a world free from the fear of War, self-sufficiency would be seen to be what it actually is—a denial that co-operative action in the sphere of economic relations can benefit all the co-operators.

There is, I admit, one special reason why the trend towards economic isolationism is popular at the present time. Mankind at present is obsessed by the idea that the golden age of opportunity lies in the past—that we must hamper and restrict because otherwise producers will lack markets. With a declining world population, it is argued, where can the goods be sold? (Marxian propaganda on the subject of the causes of War, I may say in passing, has contributed not a little to the spread of this delusion, based on the Marxian case on an utterly false analysis of the nature of profits.) But this special reason again is indicative of decay of liberal thought. It is easy enough to show that the idea of a limited economic Universe is utterly erroneous—that the population of many countries is increasing and not decreasing and that one can as easily expand consumption by raising the standard of life per capita as one can by increasing the number of mouths to be fed. It is not the difficulty of disposing of such preposterous doctrines which alarms me—it is the fact that those who hold them and use them as instruments of policy are unaware that they are inconsistent with the scheme of life which, in other respects, they purport to support. If such ideas gain credence and become, as they have increasingly become, the basis of policy, the humanistic way of life is doomed.

Does it follow, then, that we must expect a collapse of all orderly existence? Not at all: there is an alternative, but it is one which not everyone will welcome. For, as I pointed out above, there is an alternative—it used to be called "imperialism"—I shall now call it the "totalitarian solution." Strife in the international sphere (and in the economic sphere as well) would cease if the possibility of conflict were eliminated by the dominance of one power over all the rest—imposing its philosophy, using its armed might, enforcing its own economic solutions. Those who find in peace as such the highest end, will perhaps be satisfied: and such an empire might well endure, as the Germans boast the Third Reich will endure, for a thousand years. But it means the death, perhaps for ever, of the humanistic ideal, because it solves the problem of harmony, not by the conciliation of different viewpoints, by the elimination of all but one. And thus, as it seems to me, those who deny that the present conflict of ideologies are, as they have always been, profoundly wrong. The present War could only have happened because there is no agreement as to the fundamental ordering of the world's affairs. But it is not a conflict for subduing the "fringe" of civilisation as we fondly thought in 1914, in which victory is only a question of time and after which the millennium will necessarily dawn. For the period after 1919 has weakened the humane tradition and strengthened the forces of the totalitarian point of view. If the Western World wins in the field, let us hope that on this occasion it will not make the victory barren by a further sacrifice of its own ideological standpoint. How to avoid this sacrifice: how to win in the realm of the human soul as well as on the battlefield is the problem which we will have to face, if not this year, at any rate in the course of the next few years. And if victory on the field be not achieved, the problem still remains, but the solution will then be one which I shudder to contemplate.



## The Benares Hindu University Convocation

The following is the text of the address delivered by *Sir Maurice Gwyer*, K. C. B., K. C. S. I., Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India at the twenty-second Convocation of the Benares Hindu University held on the 28th. December 1939 :—

The conception of history has changed greatly even during my own life time. The world was once thought of as a vast arena where a few great men, monarchs and their counsellors, warriors, priests and prophets, guided and directed the destinies of common men. This conception no doubt had in part its origin in a social system now past or passing, but today an almost perverse delight seems to be taken in destroying reputations which were once held in honour, and that by methods as vulgar as the name which contemporary slang has given to the process itself. The task of the historian is now thought to be the apprehension and analysis of vast elemental forces, climatic, geographic or economic, which compel mankind inexorably along a predestined road ; while those who would have figured as great men in an earlier epoch are seen as puppets or marionettes, jerked hither and thither by agencies which they may dimly perceive but cannot hope to control. The emergence of the masses as a political force, the elevation of democracy from a political expedient into a moral principle, and the growth of scientific knowledge, have enlarged and made more sensitive the historian's vision, and statesmen themselves have at times been not unwilling to impute responsibility for their own failures to the operation of conveniently discovered natural laws.

There is something to be said for both of these conceptions, but the real truth seems to lie midway between them. In any historical situation it is possible always to distinguish two sets of factors : the first, the elemental forces, whatever they may be, dominating or restricting all human activity ; and the second, the free will of individuals and groups which is, it is true, conditioned in many respects by those forces, but which in its turn is able to intensify or moderate them, and even harness them for the general good. The relative importance of these sets of factors varies from age to age. There are times when the human race appears to be flung hither and thither as by some catastrophic eruption of nature, so that the ideas of free will and self-determination appear a mockery ; but at others man appears still as master of his fate and able still to exercise a decisive influence upon the course of events. This is especially the case at those critical periods which recur from time to time in the history of the world. There are moments when mankind seems to come to cross-roads and there pauses, ignorant or uncertain which path he is going to take. At these times the forces of which I have spoken as impelling him in one direction or the other are so nicely balanced that no one can say which will ultimately prevail ; and for a space of time, sometimes for a period of years, at others perhaps only for a few days, the march of events appears to be suspended until something occurs which tilts the balance one way or the other. It is at such times that the human will may be decisive ; and, just as a vast and complicated piece of machinery may be set in motion by the pressure of one man's hand, because the equipoise is so exactly adjusted, so the determination of a single individual or group may give the advantage to one set of forces, and history resumes its march in one direction and not in the other. Thus it is that men are sometimes able to affect for good or ill not only their own generation but the fortunes of generations still unborn, and awful then is the responsibility which they assume or which is thrust upon them.

The history of Germany since the middle of the last century illustrates what I have said. In the fifteen years immediately preceding the Austrian war of 1866, parliamentary liberalism in Prussia was holding its own and even making headway against the authoritarian tradition represented by the army and the landed aristocracy. The contemporary observer might well have supposed that Prussia was destined to develop along the same lines as Great Britain ; and if Bismarck had not been victorious in his struggle with the Prussian Parliament in 1862, the Germany of Goethe might have supplanted the Germany of Frederick the Great. An era of peace and co-operation with other nations might then have followed, instead of an era of aggressive nationalism and war. But the whole force of Bismarck's powerful intellect and iron will were thrown into the scale against the progressive parties ; he led his way, and for three generations Europe has paid the price in blood and treasure.

Has not little of the last century entered a period when she too is standing at the cross-roads, and when in her case also the forces which will determine her future

history seem still to be evenly balanced? Some of them make for peaceful development, for her own political and spiritual evolution. Others make for division and civil strife and for the sterility and barrenness which they engender. She is faced with the necessity for finding a solution not only for the problem of her relations with Great Britain but also for the problem of her own domestic differences; and because of the equipoise of forces I cannot doubt that in India also the human will and human character will prove decisive in the ultimate determination of the path which she is to take.

These are delicate matters to discuss and not least for one who has the honour to hold my present office, but detachment from political strife sometimes assists in bringing things into another perspective.

I see two pictures before me. I see my own country, inhabited by a united and homogeneous people, whose island home has enabled them to pursue their constitutional development with little or no interference from without, who solved the problem of domestic unity two hundred and fifty years ago and who during the last two hundred years have been undisturbed by rebellion or civil tumult, unimaginative perhaps by reason of their insular position in their relations with foreign lands, falling sometimes into grievous error—and what country has not?—but with a strain of high idealism persisting through all their policies, passionate lovers of liberty and eagerly desiring that others too should learn how to achieve it and enjoy its blessings; conscious of a great work done in India, but recognizing that the time must come when India assumes control of her own destinies; who, warned by the past distractions of India and the melancholy spectacle of Europe to-day, seek to discern that concord which will be the sign for relinquishing a government so long held in trust. I see on the other side a vast sub-continent, inhabited by proud and ancient peoples, with a history and civilization as old as that of any of the peoples of Europe, gifted and sensitive, who, having closely observed the political doctrines taught and practised by the people of Great Britain, have now sought to follow what seemed to them so excellent an example; who with the growth of the national spirit and conscious of great intellectual powers, fret at the least suggestion of foreign rule, no matter how light the rule and whether it be beneficent or harsh; who, looking ardently forward to the fulfilment of their desires, see with dismay a sort of disintegration of that national unity which had seemed to them so sure and so permanent.

These are the two pictures as I see them. Perhaps you will see them differently, but in the main I am persuaded that the outlines are correct. And this is the thought which they bring into my mind: how closely does the purpose of one country approximate to the ambition of the other and how small a space is it which seems to separate the two? Can it be that the differences between them are no more than differences of method?

The long period during which the two countries have been associated has seen many changes, but perhaps none more profound or significant than in the new conceptions both of democracy and of international relations. The task confronting this generation is to devise a political expression for this unexampled metamorphosis, and to discover a form of constitution adequate at once to the idealism of the times and to the strains that the government of so immense a country must inevitably impose. With such great issues pending, and with decisions to be taken affecting the life of the peoples of India for many generations to come, what can be more fitting in these halls devoted to study and research than to stand aside for a moment from current controversies, and to seek in the experience of other countries, when they too have been called upon to plan deliberately and sketch their political life, counsel and guidance in that most difficult of arts, the construction of the framework of a State? This may often be a more arduous task than to govern the State when made; and the arts appropriate to the one are informed by principles different from those appropriate to the other. For a constitution is an instrument intended permanently to regulate the relations between citizen and citizen and between citizens and the State. It is not like an ordinary piece of legislation; for it prescribes itself the method whereby the future laws of the State are to be made or altered.

It is of the essence of a democratic constitution (and I am concerned with no other) that ultimately, and after full discussion and deliberation, the popular will shall prevail; and no more effective political expedient has yet been discovered to achieve this result than that of universal votes. But is universal suffrage expedient and is not to be devoted to the purpose of principle. The democratic method would

scarcely be workable without majority decision in some form ; but it works because those whom it may affect are content to live under it, and they will only be content when they are confident that the expedient will not be employed to do them injustice, and because the majority of today may become the minority of tomorrow.

These considerations cannot however apply to the constitutional instrument itself, which can only be based upon a general agreement. The idea of the social contract is no doubt a fiction, but the philosophers who expounded it had at least grasped the truth that a political society, if it is to have a chance of life, must originate in the common agreement of those who compose it. I speak of a society self-contained and self-governing; for history can provide examples enough of societies of another kind which have existed for long periods, perhaps even for centuries, when held together by a strong hand, whether domestic or foreign. But a self-contained and self-governing State cannot survive if the elements which compose it are unwilling bed-followers. The strains and stresses which a compulsory partnership sets up will in the end prove fatal. The world is strewn with the ruins of paper constitutions which failed because they ignored this simple truth; and many of the evils of Europe to-day have arisen from the creation of States with an artificial unity, where a facade of constitutional safeguards and the buttress of solemn guarantees have served, if only for a time, to conceal the hollowness of the internal structure. A constitution is not to be drafted on assumption, for in so vital and fundamental a matter the results of one false step are incalculable. Let a constitution be made it is sometimes said, and in the sunshine of our content all differences will vanish like the morning mists. So too the unwilling bride may be persuaded that the affection which she does not feel will follow marriage. Sometimes it may; but it is does not how disastrous to the union are the consequences and how irretrievable.

To urge that general agreement is a condition precedent to the establishment of a successful constitution is not to put obstacles in the way of agreement. It is the beginning of wisdom, for it points out the first and cardinal step which must be taken; and thus we arrive at the next question, how is this agreement to be secured, or, if already existing, to be ascertained? Different countries have made trial of different methods, and I am aware that at the present time many people in India feel a special attraction to the method known as the Constituent Assembly. Here my theme comes so close to current politics that even before an academic audience I hesitate to do more than record the principal instances where Constituent Assemblies have been convoked and tested. But I may be permitted at least to make this observation. The Constituent Assemblies, elected on a wide franchise, which have sought to combine the securing of unity among diverse elements with the writing of the new constitution itself, have not always had a happy result. The Constituent Assembly after the French Revolution ended in committees of public safety, in Napoleon, and in twenty years of war. The experiment repeated sixty years later produced another Napoleon, war and a disastrous defeat. Of the German National Assembly at Frankfurt in 1848, an English historian has written: "It was pathetic, ambitious, laborious, quick to resent foreign injuries, solicitous to extend German power, and notable as having created the original nucleus of a German navy. After elaborate discussions characterized by a high seriousness it produced a democratic constitution for united Germany, of which there was no feature more valuable than a long array of scrupulous provisions for the protection of personal liberty. Yet its work was in vain. It is one of the tragedies of modern history that this Assembly, launched on a vast surge of national enthusiasm, was unable to accomplish its self-appointed task, and that the union of Germany was achieved, not by the give and take of Parliamentary argument, but by the blood and iron of civil and foreign war." The constitution produced by the Assembly at Weimar in 1919 did not even survive to be extinguished by the present war, but had died long since. The Russian Constituent Assembly, elected in 1917 by the votes of 45 million people, met only once. The Bolshevik minority withdrew after the refusal of the Assembly to discuss a Bolshevik declaration. The Assembly proclaimed Russia to be a Democratic Federative Republic and then adjourned; but before the day appointed for the second sitting the Soviet Executive Committee had declared its dissolution and their soldiers barred all approaches to the place where the Assembly should have met.

The French National Assembly did indeed produce a constitution on paper, but it failed to be accepted by a dictatorship, because, intoxicated with theory, it had no concept of reality. Its nineteenth century successor rejected

the war and suffered the same consequences. The German Assemblies of 1848 and 1919 were neither of them strong enough to persuade or master their discordant elements; and the Bolsheviks were determined from the first that the Russian Assembly should be extinguished at the earliest moment, and that the will of the minority should prevail.

By way of contrast, it is profitable to look at the procedure adopted for the purpose of bringing into existence the constitutions of Canada, Australia and South Africa. In Canada the idea of a federal constitution had been familiar for many years before the British North America Act; but the scheme which finally issued in the Act originated in 1864 at a conference of Ministers from the Maritime Provinces, and from Upper and Lower Canada, then united in a single Province. The resolutions adopted by the Conference were approved in Upper and Lower Canada in the following year, and a delegation visited London to discuss defence and other matters. In 1866 the legislatures of the Maritime Provinces approved the scheme, and, after a meeting in London between Canadian representatives and the British Government, the terms were finally agreed upon and the Act became law in 1867. In Australia a Federal Council with very limited powers had been set up by Statute as long ago as 1835, and the idea of federation had never lacked support. At a Conference held in Sydney in 1891, each Australian State sent delegates and passed a number of resolutions. In 1895 a Premiers' conference agreed that ten delegates elected by the electors of each State should meet to draft a constitution, to be afterwards submitted to a referendum in each. The Convention met in 1897 and drafted a constitution which after consideration by the different parliaments was finally completed in 1898 and submitted to a referendum in each State. The draft was considered by another Premiers' conference which suggested amendments for the purpose of meeting criticisms; and after discussions with the British Government an Act was introduced, which became law in 1900. In South Africa the earlier discussions on federation came to an end with the disannexation of the Transvaal, and it was not until after the South African War of 1899-1902 that it once more became a living issue. It was forced on South Africa by economic causes arising from the existence of four co-terminous independent governments, two of them without sea frontiers, with a European population extremely small in proportion to the vast areas which it inhabited. In 1908 a Railway and Customs Conference agreed to recommend that delegates should be appointed to draft a Federal Constitution; and a convention of thirty-three delegates appointed for that purpose met later in the same year. The draft constitution ultimately agreed upon was for a Union, and not a Federation, of South Africa; and in this form it was submitted to and approved by the Parliaments of three States and by a referendum in the fourth; and the South Africa Act became law in 1909. Here, then, are three constitutions which became law and are still in successful operation. They have been amended since they were made, but in no fundamental respect, and they continue generally to enjoy the confidence of the peoples for whom they were designed. The important thing to observe is, that in each of the three cases the body which hammered out the scheme consisted of a very small number of delegates, and that though no doubt there were difficulties to be overcome, there was no organized volume of opinion which either resolutely opposed or which recorded its dissent from the scheme ultimately adopted.

In a body of delegates such as I have described, men come to know each other better, to appreciate the strong points of another's case and to rub out the weaker points of their own. The impact of mind upon mind has its effect, and after some time (such is the experience of those who have taken part in "conferences of the kind) a sort of corporate sense is born, out of which there may emerge, if not a common will, at least a common desire to produce results. I do not say that this always or necessarily happens, but it can and does happen, for it is impossible for a body of men to labour together with a common object for any considerable period of time, without asperities becoming softened, misunderstandings lessened and mutual respect engendered.

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\*Western Australia held a referendum and joined the Dominion after the passing of the Act but before the date of the proclamation bringing the Commonwealth of Australia into existence.